

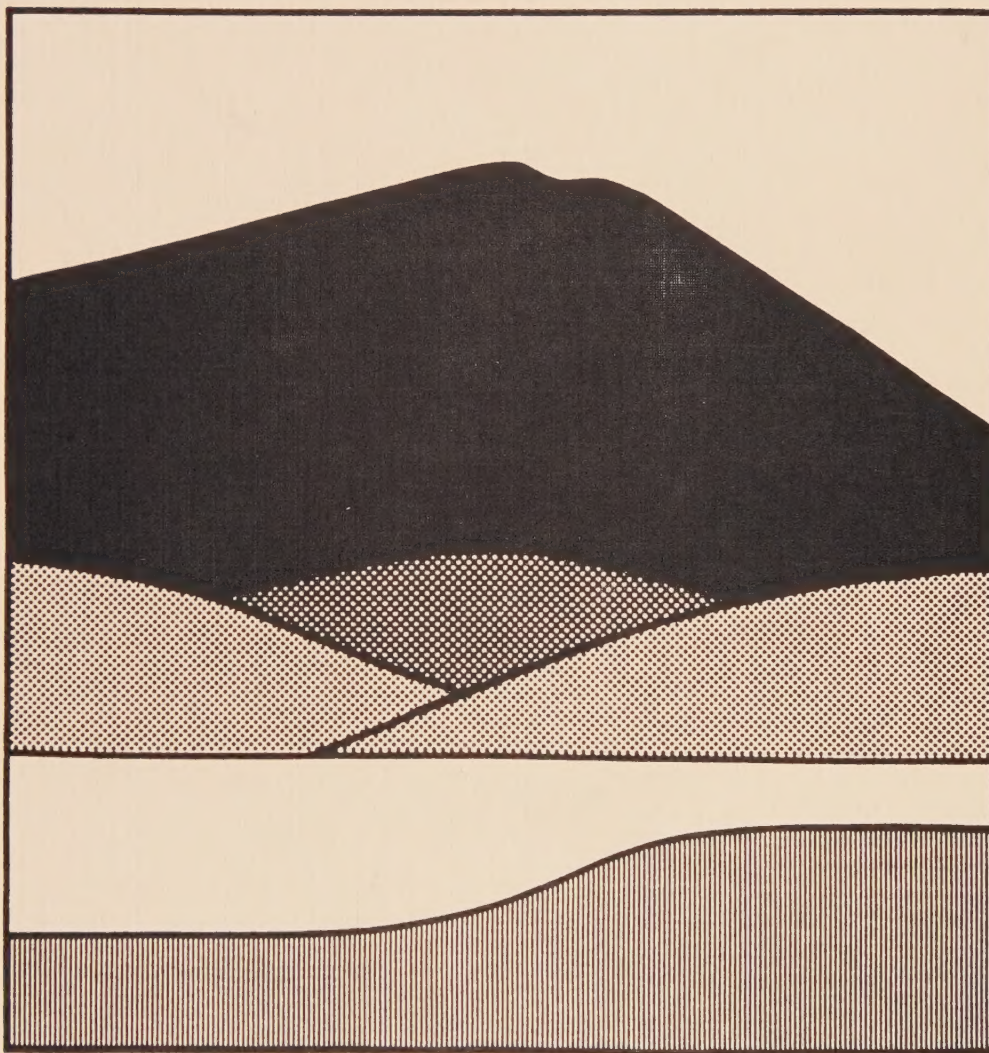
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# 1989 MILL VALLEY GENERAL PLAN



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**1989 MILL VALLEY GENERAL PLAN**

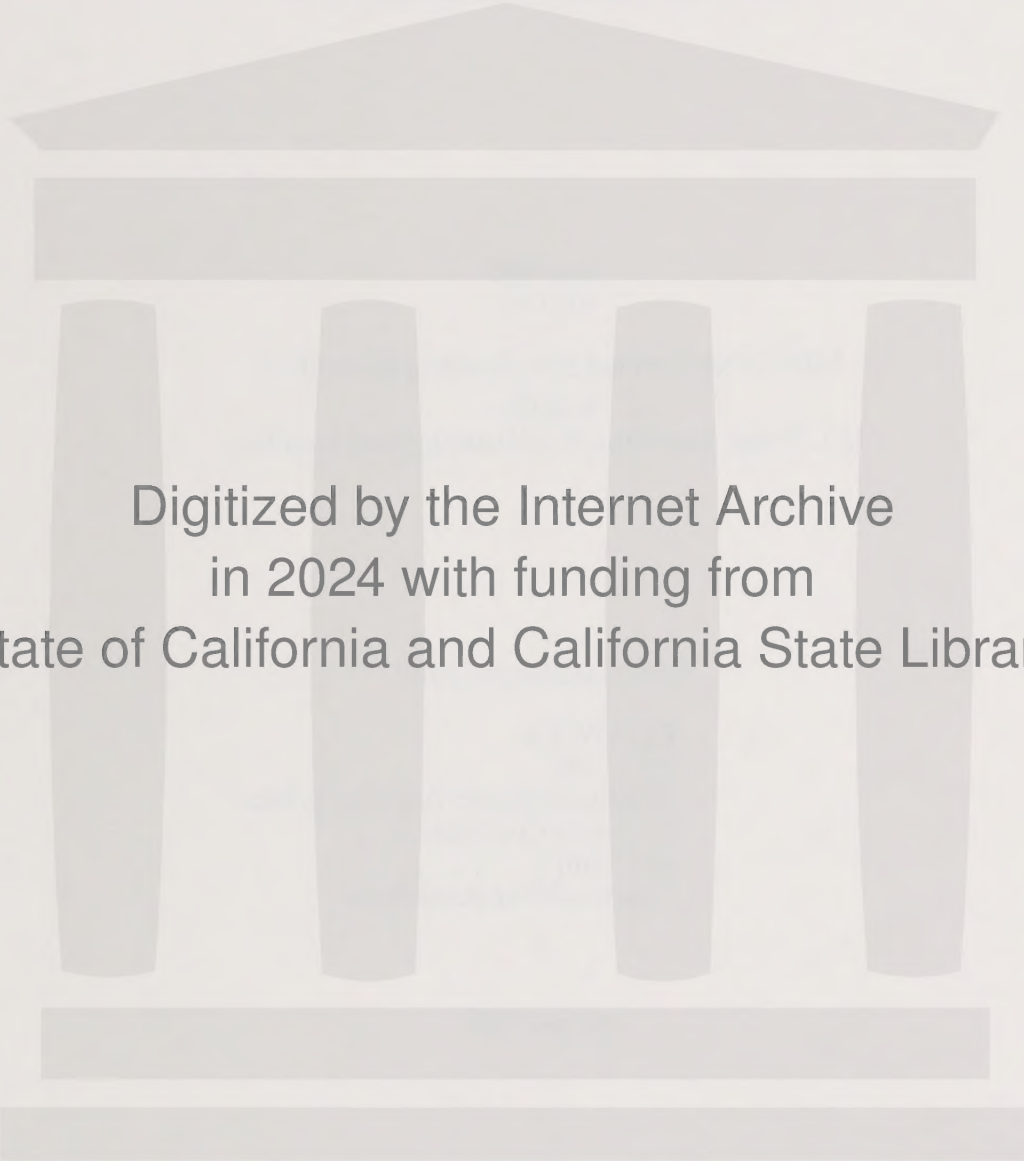
Prepared  
by the  
Mill Valley General Plan Steering Committee  
and the  
Mill Valley Department of Planning and Building

With Assistance From

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August 1989





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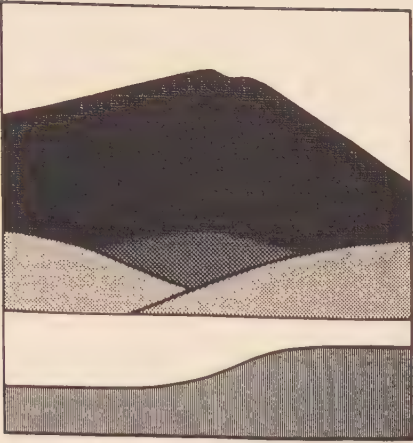


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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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# 1. Introduction and Background

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the Mill Valley General plan, which was adopted by the City Council on \_\_\_\_\_ to guide the city's inevitable change during the next decade and beyond and, in doing so, to protect the community's small town character, scenic beauty and population diversity.

This document covers planning for the City of Mill Valley, with its approximately 13,400 residents. It is a companion document to a Plan completed at the same time for the areas under County jurisdiction adjacent to the City -- Tamalpais Valley, Almonte, Homestead Valley, Muir Woods Park, and West Alto -- which have a total of about 9,000 residents.

This General Plan was drafted by a diverse group of Mill Valley residents, with assistance from the City planning Director and other city staff, and a team of outside consultants headed by EDAW. The process benefited greatly from the comments received from many Mill Valley residents at community forums and public meetings and in answers to public questionnaires. This Plan is the result of three years of work prior to its review by the City Planning Commission and its adoption by the City Council in this form.

General plans are required by State law, and must meet detailed legal requirements. This Plan complies with all of them, and provides extensive analysis and detailed statements of its policies. It is thus intended to be, in part, a guide book for those wishing to develop or change the use of or modify existing buildings. At the same time this Plan is intended to do much more than merely meet the legal requirements or be a development handbook. It is intended to be a statement of how the citizens of Mill Valley view their community, how they want it to be in the future, and, most importantly, how they intend to deal with the planning and development issues facing the community.

Plan Goals. The two principal goals of this Plan are:

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty and small town character of Mill Valley; and
- To encourage continued diversity of housing, income levels, and lifestyles in Mill Valley.

Developing a community Plan means analyzing possibilities and making choices. During this process, some of a community's goals will at times conflict with others, and decisions have to be made and priorities have to be established. The framework for the decision made in this Plan is that both new development and change in existing property should be consistent with the following important community values:

- Preserving the quality and diversity of the community's residential neighborhoods;
- Maintaining healthy, attractive commercial areas that primarily serve local residents;
- Protecting the scenic quality of the bayfront, ridgelines, and hillsides;
- Preserving and, where feasible, enhancing creeks, marshes, and other natural areas;
- Protecting people and buildings from earthquakes, landslides, flooding, wildfires, and other natural hazards;
- Minimizing traffic congestion and encouraging the use of public transit; and
- Accommodating more low- and moderate-income households than is possible under conditions in the private housing market.

Major Issues. Planning issues in Mill Valley are similar to those in other small, primarily residential suburbs that are already largely developed. In Mill Valley, significant growth is not anticipated and there are no proposals to convert agricultural lands to urban development; there are no proposals for major new street or sewer systems; and there are no plans to build new schools. But there are nevertheless issues of major importance in Mill Valley. They are summarized in this introduction and covered more fully in the rest of the plan.

Pressures for Growth and Change. These pressures have two sources: first, Mill Valley's attractiveness and proximity to San Francisco make many people want to live here; this has created a significant demand for new housing and has contributed to the sharp rise in land and housing prices. Second, Mill Valley's population is changing; this creates a variety of housing needs. For example, in keeping with state and nationwide trends, Mill Valley residents are living longer, having fewer children, and living in smaller households than in previous times. Divorce is more frequent, and so are single-parent households.

Understanding these pressures, the Plan establishes clear policies for development of the last large parcels of undeveloped residential land in the City, and sets rules for changes in existing neighborhoods; i.e., it anticipates proposals to add units to existing homes, to build ever-larger homes on the remaining undeveloped infill lots, and, increasingly, to demolish small homes and replace them with larger ones.

Buildout of Large Undeveloped Parcels. This Plan provides guidelines for the ultimate development of the last remaining privately-owned tracts of open land in the city. These are often referred to as the “RP” parcels, because they are previously zoned RP - Planned Residential. The largest of these parcels are in the Kite Hill, Alto Hill, Shelter Ridge, Warner Ridge and Cascade Canyon areas.

These properties, for the most part, represent the sections of town that were passed over in the past as the more readily developable properties were developed. Most have significant on-site environmental constraints such as areas of geologic instability, steep slopes and high fire hazard, and many include ridgelines or open grassy hillsides of high scenic value. In addition, most are also located in areas of town that have significant off-site limitations on their development potential, such as inadequate utilities, limited access options, substandard roads, excessive emergency response time and inadequate sewer and drainage facilities.

The general approach during the Plan revision process was to acknowledge the identified environmental constraints as limitation on development rather than trying to identify the extensive mitigation measures such as street widening, intersection signalization, or creek channelization projects which would be neither acceptable to existing residents nor, because of the limited undeveloped land remaining in the community, economically feasible to implement. This approach has the additional benefit of reducing on- and off-site mitigation fees which would otherwise have to be borne by the property owners.

Under the Plan, these properties will be developed with single-family homes as relatively low densities. The Plan provides property owners with reasonable uses of their lands while taking into account community concerns and the property’s environmental constraints. The Plan thus attempts to resolve the years of controversy that have accompanied previous proposals for these lands. In doing so, the Plan establishes zoning densities, access points, and the location of both homes and open areas on each of the properties.



Infill Development in Existing Neighborhoods. The Plan provides for an innovative, clear, and fair means of providing for new residential development, and for changes to present homes, in the City's established neighborhoods. Perhaps second only to traffic as a community concern is the fear that some property owners in a neighborhood may seek to remodel, enlarge, or replace dwellings in ways that interfere with others' light, air, views, and privacy. This Plan balances the rights of the property owners with the rights of neighborhood residents to protect their quality of life. The Plan's regulatory policies, providing for limits on the bulk, height, and setbacks of homes in existing neighborhoods, relies on a much simpler and clearer formula than has previously been used. This method, based in part on the use of floor area ratios (specifying how much floor space is allowable, based on the area of the lot) is described fully in the Plan.

Traffic. Increasing traffic on Mill Valley's generally narrow and often-winding streets, is, to many people, the community's major unresolved problem. While, unquestionably, any new development will likely add at least some additional traffic, the total new development allowable under this Plan should keep the increase to a minimum. Also, unquestionably, solutions to traffic problems are extremely difficult. For example, widening East Blithedale, one of the two major approaches to the City, would require the acquisition and demolition of dozens of homes, a totally unacceptable idea in the community. The Plan therefore seeks to provide for new housing and commercial development at densities that minimize their impact on traffic.

Affordable Housing. Perhaps the most difficult issue that arose during the preparation of this Plan was that of seeking to maintain the community's populations diversity by providing housing available to people in many income ranges. This has always been one of Mill Valley's strengths -- expensive housing was built, but there was also a substantial supply of relatively less costly dwellings. The real estate boom in the Bay Area has made this balance increasingly difficult to maintain. Therefore, in determining allowable densities for the former RP properties, careful study was given to whether relatively higher densities would allow more affordable housing to be built. It was determined that, at 1989 real estate prices, the densities required to achieve even moderately affordable housing would be so high and the resulting traffic and other environmental impacts so great, as to be totally unacceptable to the community.

But the Plan shows how the City can meet its "fair share" regional housing need. It maintains, and indeed increasingly emphasizes, other steps to achieve low- and moderate-income housing. These include a strong inclusionary housing policy including requiring in-lieu housing fees from anyone building two or more new homes, with the money earmarked for the development of the affordable housing elsewhere in the community.

Commercial Areas. Mill Valley has more existing commercial space than is typical for a town of its size. Most of the City's commercial areas are close to, or require access through, residential neighborhoods. The Plan thus seeks to balance the goal of minimizing traffic impacts on residential areas with the goal of maintaining healthy business areas. This means encouraging businesses that primarily serve the Mill Valley area. At the same time, it is understood that, in Marin County's highly-competitive retail climate, many businesses cannot survive without drawing at least some customers from outside the area.

In addition, the Plan recognizes that the Lytton Square area is not only the City's commercial center, but also its civic and cultural center. The Plan thus proposes special restrictions on uses and requires new commercial development there to respect the public investment in civic buildings. The Plaza, parking improvements, and the City's general efforts to maintain the area's attractiveness. The Plan also recommends appropriate uses and design guidelines for each of the City's other three commercial areas.

Schools. The Plan recognizes the importance of a strong public school system to serve the community, and advocates continued close cooperation between the city government and the Mill Valley School District. In particular, the Plan provides for efforts to address jointly any changes in school sites that may result from changes in school-age population or in school funding.

Natural Resources. The Plan continues to reflect the value the community places on the protection and, where possible, the enhancement of the community's natural resources including the bayfront, creeks, native vegetation, and visually prominent ridgelines and hillsides.

The Plan also addresses the other subjects required by law, but in a less specific way. This is not intended to signify any lesser importance, but simply reflects the City's practical decision to allocate the time and energies at its disposal to resolving the most pressing long-term land use and public policy issues as thoroughly as possible during the development of this General Plan.



## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

The approximately 13,000 people who reside within the Mill Valley City Limits comprise only approximately 60% of the total population within the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence. Also located within the Sphere of Influence immediately contiguous to the City are a number of small unincorporated communities (Tamalpais Valley, Almonte, Homestead Valley, Muir Woods Park and West Alto) which contain a total population of approximately 10,000 people. In the past, both the City of Mill Valley and the County of Marin have separate General Plan documents which cover the area included within the City's Sphere of Influence.

### **Mill Valley**

The area within the City limits was covered by the Mill Valley General Plan which was adopted in 1975. As has been the case with most of the other small cities in Marin County, except for the Housing Element which was most recently revised in December 1984, the General Plan had not been reviewed nor revised since its adoption.

### **County Area**

All of the unincorporated communities, except the portion of Alto located west of Highway 101, were included in Marin County's Tamalpais planning Area Community Plan which was adopted in 1975. The West Alto area was included in the Strawberry Community Plan which was adopted in 1973. Both of these plans were elements of the Marin Countywide plan. Except for an amendment that occurred in 1981 which covered a portion of the Tam Junction area, these plans have also not been reviewed, revised nor updated since that time.

It was generally accepted that the plans for both jurisdictions were out of date, needed revision and/or did not comply with the requirements of the California Government Code. As a result, both jurisdictions decided to undertake a review, revision and update of their respective planning documents at about the same time. Since the residents of the incorporated and unincorporated area share many of the same community goals, values and problems, and land use decisions and traffic generated in one jurisdiction directly affects the other and vice versa, the City of Mill Valley approached the Marin County Board of Supervisors to request that they participate in a coordinated planning effort to develop a coordinated set of land use goals and

policies for the entire area included within Mill Valley's Sphere of Influence. Following several public discussions of the City's proposal, the concept was endorsed by the Board of Supervisors and the required funding was allocated.

## **Study Area**

The study area for this joint planning project is generally described as being bounded on the east by Sausalito and Highway 101, on the north by the towns of Corte Madera and Larkspur, on the west by Mount Tamalpais State Park and the watershed lands of the Marin Municipal Water District, and on the south by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The total study area encompasses between eight and nine square miles of which approximately 4.75 are located within the Mill Valley City Limits. **Figure 1.1** indicates the boundaries of the planning area.

## **Planning Documents**

The project has resulted in three separate products consisting of the following:

- A revised Mill Valley General Plan covering the area currently within the Mill Valley city limits.

This document constitutes the State mandated General Plan for the City of Mill Valley. It has been reviewed by the Mill Valley Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council. It is intended to guide land use planning and related circulation and safety policies and programs of the City for the next 10 to 15 years.

- A Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan covering all of the unincorporated area within the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence

This document has been reviewed by the County Planning Commission and adopted by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, it is anticipated that this document also will be reviewed by Mill Valley Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council as the City's General Plan policies for the area within Mill Valley's Sphere of Influence but currently outside the city limits. This planning document will also be the basis for the City's intended rezoning of the unincorporated land.





Figure 1.1

## Planning Area Boundary

### Mill Valley General Plan

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- A single Environmental Impact Report which covers both planning documents

This project also included the preparation of a single Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which complies with the requirements of CEQA for a program EIR. To the extent possible, the preparation of this EIR has been incorporated into the development of the goals and policies of the two planning documents. The EIR has been considered by both the City and County Planning Commissions and the City Council and Board of Supervisors.

### **Organization And Public Participation Process**

A parallel three-tiered organizational structure at both the City and County levels was utilized during the preparation of the plans. At the City level, the top tier was an Overview Committee which consisted of the City Council and Planning Commissioners. This group functioned in an overview capacity to track the planning process and provide policy direction. Reporting to this Overview Committee was a citizens advisory committee, the Steering Committee, which was appointed by the City Council. The Steering Committee consisted of ten community residents and functioned as the primary decision-making body during the preparation of the draft plan. Two members of the City Overview Committee and a member of the County Steering Committee served as liaisons to the City Steering Committee. The third tier in the planning process consisted of several Subcommittees of Task Forces (comprised of Steering Committee members) which addressed the major planning issues.

At the County level, the Overview Committee consisted of the Supervisors from the third and fourth districts and three County Planning Commissioners. A 13-person Steering Committee selected by the County functioned in a decision-making capacity on issues that related to County concerns. A member of the County Overview Committee and a representative of the City of Sausalito served on the County Steering Committee. Subcommittees of the Steering Committee were appointed to deal with special issues. Early in the process, the Overview and Steering Committees of both the County and the City held joint sessions.

### 1.3 STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL PLANS

California State Planning and Zoning Law requires that each local jurisdiction prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan for its physical development and any appropriate lands outside its boundaries (Government Code Section 65300 et seq.). For Chartered cities, such as Mill Valley, the General Plan must contain a set of mandatory elements which address local conditions and establish goals, policies and implementation programs for the following topics:

- **Land Use**
- **Circulation**
- **Housing**
- **Conservation**
- **Open Space**
- **Noise**
- **Safety**

These mandatory elements may be combined in any manner, provided that the specific requirements for each topic are thoroughly addressed. In order to ensure that the General Plan will function as one cohesive document, State law requires that the Plan be “internally consistent.” This means that the policies and implementation programs of one element must not contradict, or must be consistent with the policies and implementation programs of the other elements. Following adoption of the General Plan, State law requires that all land use decisions and capital expenditures made by the City be consistent with the General Plan. It also requires that the City’s Zoning Ordinance and other implementation tools must also be amended to be consistent with the General Plan. State law also specifies that a General Plan should be reviewed, and revised as necessary, no more than five years following its adoption so that it continues to reflect current circumstances and community values.

## **1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THIS GENERAL PLAN**

The Mill Valley General Plan is organized such that the four sections following this introduction comprise all seven of the mandatory elements.

Section 2 - LAND USE, includes the mandatory Land Use, Conservation and Open Space elements.

Section 3 - HOUSING, constitutes the mandatory Housing element.

Section 4 - TRANSPORTATION,, constitutes the mandatory Circulation element.

Section 5 - PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY, contains the mandatory Noise and Safety elements.

A separate document, the APPENDIX, contains additional information which is only summarized in this Plan.

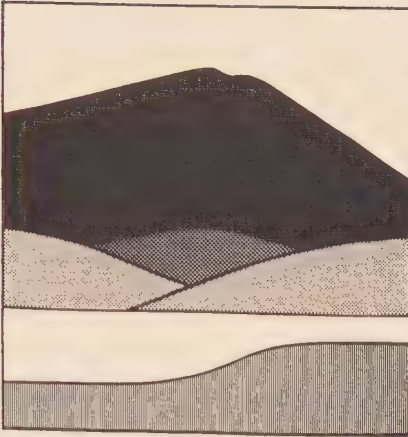
In addition to the requirements of California Planning and Zoning Law, the provisions of the California environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are also applicable to the preparation and adoption of a General Plan. Following the preparation of an Initial Environmental Study and the circulation of a Notice of Preparation, a complete program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared on the Plan. While this EIR is Section 6 in the Plan, much of the discussion of existing and future environmental conditions is covered in the text of the preceding four sections of the Plan and, wherever possible, the topics of the EIR are referenced in these sections.





## LAND USE

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## **2. Land Use**

### **2.1 PURPOSE**

This Land Use Section constitutes the mandatory Land Use, Conservation and Open Space Elements. Its purpose is to analyze existing and future conditions regarding residential and commercial land uses, recreation and cultural facilities, public services, jurisdictional boundaries and open space. Based upon the community values, listed in Section 1, it then describes the City's vision for the future, and provides policies and implementation programs to guide development and land use decisions.

### **2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING AREA**

Nestled among the redwoods and sheltered by Mt. Tamalpais, Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area provide a sense of refuge from the busy urban environment of the larger Bay Area. The two neighboring communities are bounded by the hillsides and steep ridges of the coastal mountains and the water of Richardson Bay which form natural edges to urban growth (**Figure 2.1**). Many of the ridgelines which create the dominant visual backdrop for the communities are now preserved as permanent open space. Similarly, the bayfront lands are relatively undeveloped and provide both visual and physical access to the water, as well as important habitat. Creeks, redwood groves, heavily forested and grass-covered hillsides, marshes and chaparral are commonplace within the communities. Single-family residential neighborhoods are located in the valleys and on the hillsides, with commercial and more intensive residential uses clustered on the flat low lands. The residential and commercial areas, together with the natural setting, create a small-town community character which is cherished by the area's residents.

Highway 101 runs adjacent to the entire eastern edge of the Planning Area and is a critical link to other Marin County communities, as well as San Francisco to the south and Sonoma County to the north. There are three freeway interchanges along this segment of the highway corridor. The Mill Valley/Stinson Beach exit to the south is the gateway to the Tamalpais Planning Area and is also the primary access route to coastal recreation areas via Highway 1. The Redwood Highway Frontage Road/Seminary Drive interchange provides access to Hamilton Drive in Mill

Valley and the Strawberry Peninsula to the east of Highway 101. The East Blithedale/Tiburon Boulevard exit accesses Mill Valley and connects with the central neighborhoods and the downtown area. East Blithedale, Miller Avenue, Camino Alto and Shoreline Highway are the primary arterials in the community.

The existing residential areas are primarily made up of single-family detached homes with clusters of multi-family units located adjacent to the commercial areas or along arterial streets. Many residential areas are adjacent to neighborhood shopping districts. This provides residents the opportunity to walk to the commercial areas - a rare feature in most suburban communities. In 1985 there were approximately 9,830 of residential units in the Planning Area and a total population of 22,300 (ABAG, "Projections '87"). At that time, the City comprised 57 percent of the Planning Area population. Overall residential densities are generally between 2 and 7 dwelling units per acre, however, over the past few years, considerable multiple-family residential development has occurred. Homes located on the hillsides and within canyons are generally at lower densities, up to one unit per ten acres, along narrow and twisting roadways.

There are five primary commercial areas within the combined Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area: Town Center/Lytton Square, Lower Miller Avenue, East Blithedale Ave/Alto Center, Redwood Highway Frontage Road and Tam Junction. Shoreline Center, the Manzanita Area and Almonte Junction also provide a limited range of commercial and office uses. The urban design character of the commercial areas ranges from the tightly clustered and compact Town Center/Lytton Square to the Alto Center which has an open landscaped parking lot adjacent to a string of multi-tenant buildings. Tam Junction and Lower Miller Avenue contain most of the parcels which could be redeveloped in the future. Due to the limited range of commercial uses available in Tam Junction, residents of the Tamalpais Planning Area utilize the commercial areas in Mill Valley for their commercial needs.

The City of Mill Valley has few remaining large parcels that have not been developed or acquired for public open space. Furthermore, the development potential of these remaining lands is limited due to environmental and infrastructure capacity constraints. Because so little undeveloped land is available and a strong market demand exists for new homes and commercial space in Mill Valley, the City is now experiencing pressure to redevelop parcels and increase the building intensity in already developed areas.



This factor has significantly influenced the emphasis of this General Plan and has shifted the Plan's focus toward addressing issues associated with infill development, redevelopment of certain areas, the provision of public services and circulation conditions.

In contrast to the limited vacant land in Mill Valley, the Tamalpais Planning Area has approximately 1,200 undeveloped parcels with a maximum estimated development potential of 985 housing units. However, the number of units ultimately built in the Tamalpais Planning Area may be fewer than this once site specific environmental constraints and roadway conditions are assessed.

## **2.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.3.1 Existing Conditions and Projections**

In general, the densities specified by the City's residential zoning designations are considered to be an approximation of the actual existing residential densities. Spot field checks throughout the developed areas of the community were made to verify this assumption. Because net density calculations are used, only the built residential areas were included in the following density descriptions. Public streets and secured open space area (except "common areas" in apartment or condominium complexes), parks, schools and vacant parcels were not counted. Existing residential building intensity is largely determined by the minimum site area, and setbacks and maximum building coverage and height restrictions of the appropriate zoning category.

Overall, densities of single-family residential areas within the city range from one home per ten acres in remote hillside areas to seven homes per acre on flat topography. Existing multi-family densities generally range from six units per acre for duplexes and other attached dwellings to 29 units per acre for apartments. The following discussion of the residential neighborhoods defined on **Figure 2.1** and their distinctive character also includes a description of the typical, existing densities.



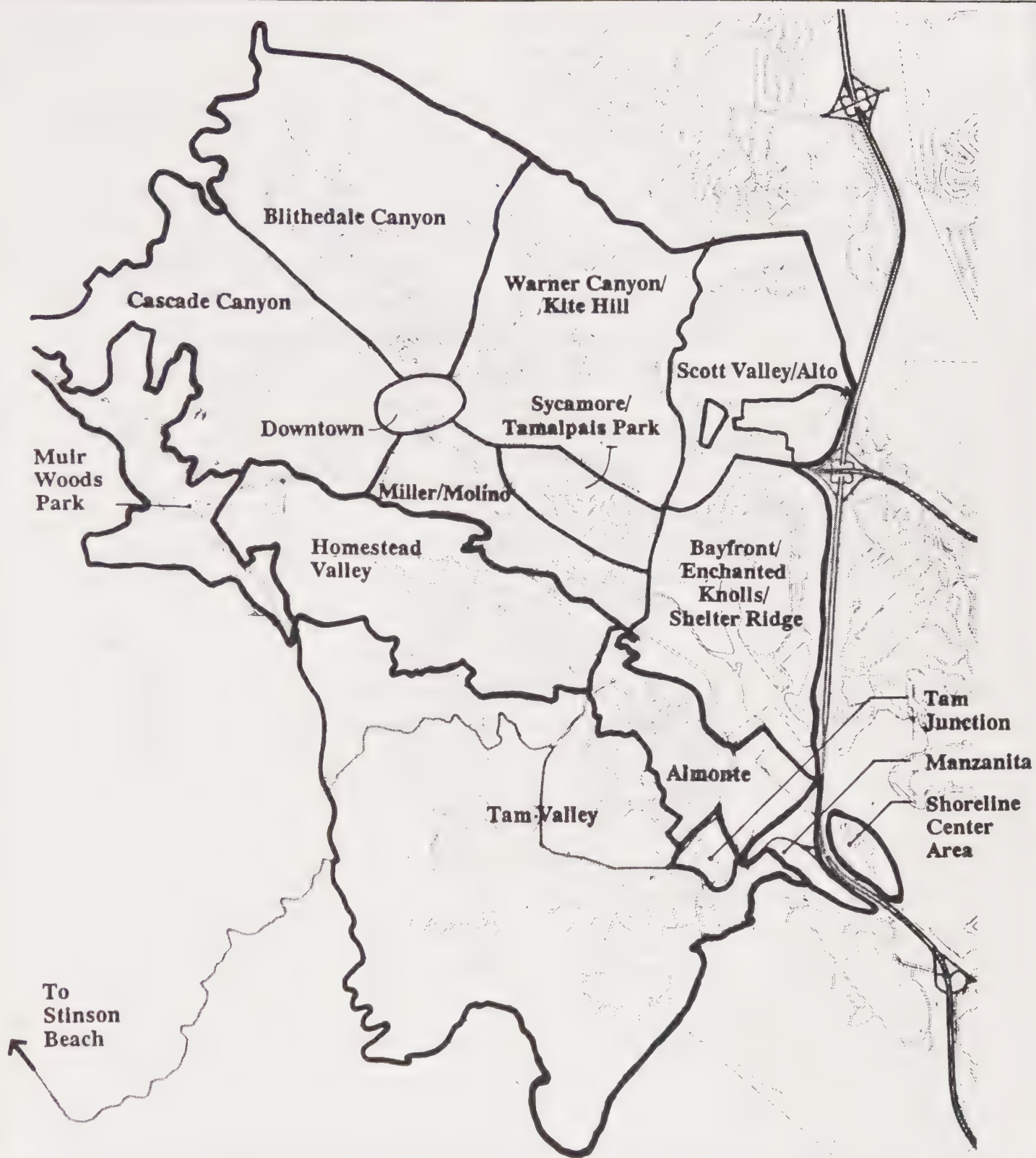


Figure 2.1

## Mill Valley Neighborhoods

# Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates







## **Cascade and Blithedale Canyons**

The character of these two neighborhoods is quite similar. Each is characterized by narrow, circuitous roads, the visual prominence of the redwoods and broadleaf evergreens which screen most residential structures from full view, and the sense of containment provided by the canyon walls. Each area also contains a great variety of housing types and styles. The use of natural materials and earthtone colors common throughout both of these neighborhoods contributes to the subordination of the man-made elements to the natural setting.

The key design concern in these neighborhoods should be protection of the visual dominance of the natural setting. To achieve this end, buildings should be sited a sufficient distance from the roadway to provide for screening by existing vegetation which should be retained. The existing narrow road widths should be maintained and the predominant use of natural materials and earth-tone colors for residential structures should be encouraged.

Existing single-family residential densities near the canyon floor average approximately four to seven homes per acre. Low density single-family development on the surrounding hillsides is generally one to two homes per acre and as low as one home per ten acres in some of the steeper, more remote areas.

## **Miller/Molino Area**

Like Cascade and Blithedale Canyons, hillside roads in this area are narrow and circuitous. Here, however, vegetation is somewhat less dense. The slopes immediately above Miller Avenue are covered with redwood and broadleaf evergreens while the balance of the area is more open. However, introduced vegetation in the latter area is now gradually producing an appearance similar to that of the redwood and broadleaf evergreen dominated area. Since development is located on the northeast facing slopes, broad views out over the central portion of Mill Valley are provided from both the roadways and residences. In turn, development on these slopes may be visually prominent from central portions of Mill Valley. The key design policies for this area should be to encourage the use of natural building materials and earth-tone colors. New trees and planting should complement the native vegetation.

Existing single-family residential density on the hillside areas is generally in the range of four to seven homes per acre and multi-family densities along Miller Avenue generally range from 12 to 17 units per acre.

### **Sycamore/Tam Park/Central Triangle**

The relatively level topography and more conventional lotting pattern of the Central Triangle creates a design character, as well as living choice, quite different from that which prevails throughout most of Mill Valley. Consequently, the freestanding homes, each on its own readily identifiable lot, level front yards and tree-lined streets with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks take on a special importance within the context of Mill Valley. Other design features which distinguish this neighborhood are road layout--sightlines along most of the streets do not extend more than several blocks--and the predominance of older structures, many of which have design details which lend visual richness to the area.

It is the City's intent to preserve the special visual distinctiveness of this area and to ensure that new or expanded homes are limited to a scale compatible with that of other existing residences in the neighborhood. The appearance of the streets created by regularly spaced street trees should be reinforced by removal of diseased or aged trees and replacement by trees of the same type. Sidewalks which are in disrepair should be repaired.

With the exception of parcels backing onto Corte Madera Creek, site landscaping should maintain a more formal appearance and should preserve the visual prominence of the individual homes as viewed from the fronting street. Front yard setbacks should be maintained and fences within the front yards should be limited.

Existing single-family residential densities in this area are generally four to seven units per acre.

### **Warner Canyon/Kite Hill**

Two distinctive characters occur within the Warner Canyon area. In the lower, southern portion, development more closely resembles that of the Central Triangle. In this portion, the same policies outlined for the Central Triangle area should be followed. Within the main canyon portion, vegetation is less dense than in the Cascade and Blithedale Canyons, and introduced plant materials are predominant except along the creek where riparian plant communities occur and along the upper edges of the Canyon where broadleaf evergreens are found. With the exception of scattered cottages constructed before the major residential growth in this area, residential structures are generally one-story, ranch-style buildings.

Special attention should be given to the design of residential structures which adjoin existing and proposed open space areas. Along these edges, use of natural materials and earth-tone colors should be required and landscaping should be limited to plant materials compatible with those found in the immediately adjoining area in order that these additions will blend into the adjoining open space setting.

The natural landscape character should be retained along the Camino Alto. For the properties on Kite Hill where some new single-family homes will be built, special attention to building siting, materials and colors is appropriate and landscape materials should relate to the existing natural conditions.

Existing single-family residential densities generally range from an average of one and one-half homes per acre in the hillside areas to seven homes per acre in the flatter areas near Buena Vista. Multi-family densities along East Blithedale Avenue generally range from nine to 17 units per acre.

#### **Scott Valley/Alto Bowl/Enchanted Knolls/Bayfront**

The development pattern and appearance of this area have been firmly established. Its appearance differs substantially from other hill areas to the west because it was built to contemporary subdivision standards. In addition, during the past ten to 15 years, several large condominium developments have been constructed in this area.

While in its original state much of this area was devoid of major landscape materials, trees have been heavily planted in the years since its development. In some areas these introduced plants have reached a scale which now creates the effect of a heavily vegetated area. This pattern of landscaping should continue to be encouraged in this area.

Special efforts to regulate building siting, materials and colors are appropriate for the properties on Alto Hill and Shelter Ridge where some new single-family homes will be built. In addition, in these areas landscape materials should be selected to relate to the existing natural conditions.

Existing single-family residential densities generally range from two to seven homes per acre and multi-family densities generally range from seven to 17 units per acre.



## **Downtown**

Residential development in the downtown area varies considerably in size and design. Residential units range from small apartments over commercial space to relatively large single family homes and condominiums. Existing multi-family densities on scattered sites within the downtown area are generally in the range of 14 to 29 units per acre.

As Mill Valley approaches buildout and the last remaining infill lots in these neighborhoods are developed, it becomes even more important that new residential development respect both the natural amenities of the particular site and the existing scale and design character of the neighborhood.

### **2.3.2 Residential Design Guidelines**

**Policy R-1:** New residential development shall be compatible with the scale and appearance of the particular neighborhood and shall be integrated with and subordinate to its natural setting.

**Program R-1-1:** The City will require Design Review approval for all new single and multi-family residential buildings, all additions or alterations to multi-family buildings and all major additions to and/or reconstructions of existing single-family homes (those involving 50 percent or more of the gross floor area of the existing residence). During the Design Review process the following site planning, building design and landscape guidelines shall be utilized:

#### **Site Planning Guidelines:**

Guideline 1: SITE GRADING - Residential projects should be designed to minimize cut and fill areas. Special care should be taken to final grade all disturbed areas to a natural appearing configuration and to plant or seed them to prevent erosion. Low retaining walls should be considered where their use would minimize uphill cutting.

Guideline 2: PROTECTION OF EXISTING VEGETATION - Residential projects should be designed to preserve significant site vegetation.



Guideline 3: PROTECTION OF RIDGELINE VIEW - New residential structures should be located and designed so as to minimize the obstruction of any ridge silhouette when viewed from off-site locations.

Guideline 4: DRAINAGE - Each building site should be final graded so that no concentrated water caused by improvements flows onto an adjacent property, but instead is directed toward a natural drainage channel, street or storm drainage facility.

Guideline 5: DRIVEWAYS - The maximum slope of new residential driveways should not exceed 25 percent and all driveways with greater than 18 percent slope should be constructed of textured concrete. Driveways and walkways should be designed to follow as closely as practical the natural contours of the property. Driveways should be designed to provide safe access, ease of grade and minimize grading and/or retaining walls.

Guideline 6: PARKING - All new homes shall have a minimum of two on-site parking spaces and, unless adequate on-street guest parking is available, shall have at least one additional uncovered off-street guest parking space. All garages with less than a 20 foot setback from the edge of the street should have sectional overhead doors with automatic garage door openers.

Guideline 7: RETAINING WALLS - Large single plane retaining walls should be avoided. The maximum height of any single plane retaining wall should not exceed ten feet in height. If unavoidable, cut banks higher than ten feet should have stepped retaining walls. Retaining walls should be wood, stone or concrete. Concrete walls should be textured and/or colored to match adjacent soil or plant color or should be faced with redwood boards, brick or stone.

Guideline 8: FENCES - Fences should be designed and located so that they do not block vehicle and pedestrian sight lines, are compatible with the design of the residential building and are aesthetically attractive.

## **Building Design Guidelines:**

Guideline 9: INTEGRATION WITH TOPOGRAPHY - All new residential buildings constructed on sloping land should be designed to relate to the existing land forms and step with the slope in order to minimize the building mass and bulk and integrate the structure and the site.

Guideline 10: SCALE - All new or remodeled residential structures should be designed to avoid monumental or excessively large dwellings which are out of character with their setting and other dwellings in the neighborhood.

Guideline 11: MINIMIZING MASS - Residential buildings should not have large expanses of any material on a single plane. Vertical and horizontal elements should be used to add architectural variety and to break-up building planes. The maximum size of a single vertical element exposed to view should not exceed ten feet (vertical measurement) by 30 feet (horizontally). Roof overhangs (exceeding the requirement for sunscreening) and deck and upper story cantilever construction should be avoided if the building form increases the effective bulk of the construction when viewed from below.

Guideline 12: MATERIALS & COLORS - Residential buildings should utilize building materials and colors that minimize the visual impact of development and blend with the existing land form and vegetative cover, are compatible with others in the neighborhood and do not attract attention to themselves. Siding materials should be natural colors or painted or stained earth-tones or other colors, approved through the Design Review process, which are appropriate for the setting and compatible with those of other buildings in the vicinity. Trim and window colors should be compatible and/or accent colors approved through the Design Review process.

Manufactured materials, such as concrete, stucco, metal, glass or plastic, should be used in moderation to avoid visual conflicts with the building's natural setting. Building materials such as aluminum, stainless steel, plastic or large areas of glass that reflect light toward existing residential structures should be avoided.

Guideline 13: WINDOWS - Window size, placement and design should be selected to maximize the privacy between adjacent residential units. To the extent consistent with other design considerations, the placement and size of windows should also maximize energy conservation and minimize heat gain/loss and glare.

Guideline 14: ROOFS & SKYLIGHTS - All roofs should be of non-combustible materials chosen to be compatible with the surroundings. Where visible from off-site locations, skylights should be flat lens (and not bubble) type and should not have white or light opaque colored exterior lenses. All exposed metals, such as roof vents, flue pipes, fireplace chimneys and caps, should be painted flat black or a color compatible with the main structure.

Guideline 15: EXTERIOR LIGHTING - Both construction and permanent exterior lighting should be designed to eliminate glare and annoyance to adjacent property owners and passersby. Lighting should be shielded and directed downward. Lamps should be low wattage and have an incandescent light color.

Guideline 16: FOUNDATION SCREENING - Foundation screening should be used to enclose downhill structural and mechanical elements, such as deck posts, beams and joists, lateral bracing and drains and downspouts to minimize the visual impact on downhill neighbors.

Guideline 17: ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES - All inhabitable structures should be designed to meet or exceed the current California Energy Commission standards. Consideration should be given to utilizing passive solar energy methods to reduce energy consumption.

### **Landscape Guidelines:**

Guideline 18: COMPATIBILITY WITH SETTING - Landscape plans for residential developments should be compatible with the character of the site and surrounding developed properties. In more natural locations, native or naturally appearing vegetation, with generally rounded, natural forms, should be placed to appear as loose, informal clusters.



Guideline 19: SELECTION OF PLANT MATERIALS - Landscape plans for new residential developments should include a mix of fast and slow growing plant materials. Fast growing trees that have a short life span should only be used when planted with others which reach a later maturity. Trees that tend to break in high winds, such as monterey cypress, monterey pine and certain types of eucalyptus should not be planted where at full maturity they might fall on residences, public roads or walkways.

Guideline 20: EROSION CONTROL - Landscape plans should include appropriate planting to repair, reseed and/or replant all grading cuts to prevent erosion.

Guideline 21: BLOCKING UNDESIRABLE OFF-SITE VIEWS - Landscape plans should provide appropriate planting to screen or soften undesirable off-site views.

Guideline 22: MAXIMIZING PRIVACY BETWEEN RESIDENCES - New residential developments should include appropriate landscaping to maximize privacy between building sites and ensure minimum intrusion upon the privacy of adjoining residences.

Guideline 23: SOFTENING THE APPEARANCE OF NEW BUILDINGS - Landscape plans should include appropriate planting to soften the appearance of the new homes as seen from off-site locations.

Guideline 24: FOUNDATION SCREENING - Landscape plans should include appropriate screening for architectural elements, such as building foundations and deck supports, that cannot be mitigated through architectural design.

Guideline 25: MINIMIZING WATER USE - Plant materials native to Northern California and Marin County, and those that are drought tolerant, should be utilized for residential landscaping. Landscape plans should comply with the current water conservation regulations of the Marin Municipal Water District and should include water conserving irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation, low flow sprinklers and automatic controls. While irrigation will probably be required initially in order to establish the new plants, the plant material should be selected so that once established, much of the major site landscaping could survive on rainfall. Because of the high water usage, turf areas should in general be minimized and narrow turf areas such as in parking strips should be avoided.



Guideline 26: MINIMIZING FIRE HAZARDS - Plant materials should be selected to minimize fire hazards to residential structures. In areas of high fire hazard, the landscape plans should be reviewed by the Fire Department and appropriate “greenbelting” landscaping should be incorporated into the plan.

Guideline 27: PARKING & TRASH AREA SCREENING - Where possible, trash areas and large, parking areas should be screened from view from public areas using earth berms, plant materials and/or fences.

Guideline 28: PROTECTION OF EXISTING VIEWS - Landscape plans should take into consideration the future impact the new planting may have in obstructing views from existing adjacent and distant dwellings.

## **General**

Guideline 29: OTHER STANDARDS - In projects which involve Master Plan and/or Tentative Subdivision Map approvals, more specific design guidelines may be incorporated into the conditions of approval.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as plans are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

**Figure 2.1** (following page 2-3) indicates the neighborhood by neighborhood residential buildout potential of the City of Mill Valley under this plan. The buildout projections for the infill properties are based upon the policies contained in this Plan which assume a continuation of the existing development patterns and densities. The buildout projections for the former RP properties are based on the land use policies in the following section.

### **2.3.3 Residential Building Intensity**

During the past several years, the size of residential buildings in Mill Valley has steadily increased. Indications of this trend include:

- A significant increase in the average size of new single-family residences constructed on previously undeveloped lots;

- An increased number of applications for demolitions of small older homes in order to replace them with substantially larger homes;
- An increasing number of applications for major additions to existing homes which double or triple the size of the existing homes; and
- An increase in the number of proposals to build considerably larger multi-family units than were contemplated when the RM - Multi-Family residential zoning districts were established.

This trend toward significantly larger housing units has also been seen in other communities with limited remaining land available for new development and where high residential land values justify the substantial investment required. While the visual impact of these large housing units is significant, this trend also threatens to diminish the existing supply of smaller housing units within the community, significantly alter the existing character of residential neighborhoods and reduce the light and privacy of adjacent homes. The concerns over the construction of these large homes was one of the major planning issues which arose during the General Plan revision process.

Historically, Mill Valley's zoning regulations primarily use "lot coverage" as a means of regulating building size. Lot coverage essentially measures the footprint of the building. As a result, a single story 2,000 square foot with a 500 square foot two car garage would have 2,500 square feet of lot coverage as would a two story 4,000 square foot house with a two car garage - yet the mass and the visual appearance of the two homes would be significantly different. It is generally accepted that some type of "floor area ratio" approach is a better way to measure the visual bulk of a building than using "lot coverage". Floor area ratio is a measure of the ratio between total floor area within a building and the lot area. As the floor area in a building mass increases, so does the floor to site area ratio. The typical formula for determining floor area ratio is as follows:

$$\text{Floor Area Ratio} = \frac{\text{Gross Floor Area (excluding the garage)}}{\text{Gross Site Area}}$$

As part of the General Plan Revision Project, information was obtained on the lot size and home size for all new homes approved by the City during 1987 and 1988 as well as for those homes being reviewed as of January 1, 1989. This information also indicated which of the homes were built on previously undeveloped lots and which were "tear downs" - that is, were built on lots

where the previous home was removed to accommodate the construction of the new home. Of the 18 homes approved in 1987, 15 were built on vacant lots and three were “tear downs”. Of the 13 homes approved in 1988, six were constructed on previously undeveloped lots and seven were “tear downs”.

The floor area ratios of these homes varied greatly, from a low of less than .01 to a high of .48. While the average home size was indeed increasing (from 2,296 square feet in 1987 to 2,803 square feet in 1988 and 4,488 square feet for those homes being reviewed as of January 1, 1989), the floor area ratio in fact went down quite rapidly (from .22 in 1987, to .11 in 1988 to .07 for those homes pending review as of January 1, 1989). This is directly attributable to the fact that for these three periods, the average lot size for the homes increased from .24 acres in 1988 to .60 acres in 1988 and to one and one-half acres for all of the homes pending review as of January 1, 1989.

### **Maximum Size of Single-Family Homes**

This Plan recommends use of a sliding scale floor area ratio limitation on house size which allows a 35 percent floor area ratio for lots up to 8,000 square feet and then a declining floor area ratio thereafter based on five percent of the lot size plus 2,500 square feet. This approach is one which is relatively simple to describe and calculate and at the same time seems to be the most appropriate at all lot sizes. If this approach is applied to the ten “tear downs” which were approved during 1987 and 1988 it would have required reductions in size (some quite significant) in seven of the new homes. As a result, at least some of the recent economic incentive to tear down the existing housing would have been removed.

Floor area ratios typically are based on gross living space excluding garage areas. It is not at all uncommon to now see homes with three or four car garages. In addition, often on hillside lots, houses have considerable volume which the applicant chooses not to use as living space. These over-size garages, workshops, under floor and attic spaces all add to the visual bulk of the home. In measuring the real bulk of a new home or an addition to an existing home, it is important to somehow take this additional bulk into consideration. The following policy specifies that the City will utilize an “Adjusted Floor Area Ratio” approach. This “Adjusted Floor Area Ratio” which is intended to still be relatively simple to calculate, would start with the typical gross floor



area in the home to which would be added any garage space over 500 square feet (the size of a good sized two car garage) plus any other unfinished and/or potentially usable space with a minimum head height of seven and one-half feet and minimum dimensions of eight feet by ten feet. Using this “Adjusted Floor Area Ratio” it is possible to measure many areas that would otherwise not be counted using a typical floor area ratio approach.

**Policy R-2:** Because large new homes and large additions to existing homes threaten to reduce the existing supply of smaller housing units within the community, significantly alter the existing character of residential neighborhoods and reduce the light and privacy of adjacent homes, the City shall carefully regulate the size, height and setback of all new or expanded residential buildings.

**Program R-2-1:** The City will amend the municipal code to specify that, unless variance finding can be made, the total maximum “Adjusted Floor Area” (gross enclosed floor area plus any garage space over 500 square feet in size and any potential living space with minimum dimensions of seven and one-half feet head room and eight feet by ten feet in size) in all conventional single-family zoning districts (current RS zoning) shall not exceed 35 percent of lot area (excluding any driveway or roadway easements) for lots of 8,000 square feet or less. For lots larger than 8,000 square feet, the total “Adjusted Floor Area” shall not exceed five percent of lot area (excluding any driveway or roadway easements) plus 2,500 square feet to a maximum of 7,000 square feet.

[For example, a maximum of 2,100 square feet of “Adjusted Floor Area” would be allowed on a 6,000 square foot lot, 2,800 square feet on a 8,000 square foot lot, 3,000 square feet on a 10,000 square foot lot, 3,250 square feet on a 15,000 square foot lot, 3,600 square feet on a 22,000 square foot lot, and 4,750 square feet on a 45,000 square foot lot.]

**Time Frame:** Within three months of Plan approval.

**Program R-2-2:** The City will determine the “Adjusted Floor Area” for structures in all planned residential zoning districts through the Master Plan or Design Review approval process with the size standards for the conventional zoning districts being used as a guide.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as plans are reviewed during the life of the Plan.



## **Maximum Size and Density of New Multi-Family Projects**

As is the case with most other cities, Mill Valley historically used density (units per acre) and parking, setback, height and coverage standards to limit the size of multi-family projects. It is generally accepted that the previous system did not work for anyone involved in the planning process including the applicants, realtors, prospective purchasers of property, the neighbors and the local decision makers. In the context of the size units applicants have recently proposed (many the historic size of single-family detached homes), the RM - 1.5 (29 units per acre) density designations are not appropriate. At the same time, reducing the permitted density to reflect the larger units most applicants have requested would run counter to the City policy expressed in the Housing Element to encourage the construction of smaller units. As a result, this General Plan proposes that the City's approach to multi-family densities be drastically revised.

The new approach is to establish an appropriate "Adjusted Floor Area" size for the given lot and then allow it to be divided into various unit configurations as long as the City's on-site parking requirements are met. This approach would allow a greater number of small units or a lesser number of larger units. Instead of the historic RM (Multi-Family Residential) zoning designations, there would be two multi-family designations: a "Higher Density Multi-Family" designations in areas such as those covered by the RM - 1.5 (29 units per acre) zoning around the downtown in order to reinforce the "village" type character and a "Lower Density Multi-Family" designation for outlying areas such as those covered by the RM - 3.5 (12 units per acres) zoning along Miller Avenue between Mill Valley Lumber and Willow.

**Policy R-3:** The City will utilize two new multi-family residential zoning districts (a "Lower Density Multi-Family" and a "Higher Density Multi-Family") to replace the RM zoning districts. A maximum 35 percent "Adjusted Floor Area Ratio" will be used in the "Lower Density Multi-Family" areas and a maximum 40 percent "Adjusted Floor Area Ratio" will be utilized in the "Higher Density Multi-Family" areas. The total permitted area would then be allowed to be divided into various unit combinations as long as at least the minimum required on-site parking is provided.

**Program R-3-1:** The City will amend the Municipal Code to create a new “Lower Density Multi-Family” zoning district (to cover areas such as that included in the existing RM - 3.5 zoning along Miller Avenue) which will specify that the total maximum “Adjusted Floor Area” shall not exceed 35 percent of the lot area (excluding any driveway or roadway easements) with the total permitted area then allowed to be divided into various unit combinations as long as the required on-site parking is provided.

[For example, 1,750 square feet of “Adjusted Floor Area” would be allowed on a 5,000 square foot lot, 2,800 square feet on an 8,000 square foot lot, and 3,500 square feet on a 10,000 square foot lot. The permitted number of units would no longer be specified by the zoning, instead, a lot with a maximum of 3,000 square feet of total permitted building area could be divided into two 1,500 square foot units, three 1,000 square foot units, four 750 square foot units, five 600 square foot units, or one 1,500 square foot unit and two 750 square foot units.]

**Time Frame:** Within three months of Plan adoption.

**Program R-3-2:** The City will amend the Municipal Code to create a new “Higher Density Multi-Family” zoning district (to cover areas such as those included in the existing RM - 1.5 zoning around the downtown) which will specify that the maximum total “Adjusted Floor Area” shall not exceed 40 percent of the lot area (excluding any driveway or roadway easements) with the total permitted area then allowed to be divided into various combinations as long as the required on-site parking is provided.

[For example, 2,000 square feet of “Adjusted Floor Area” would be allowed on a 5,000 square foot lot, 3,200 square feet on an 8,000 square foot lot, 4,000 square feet on a 10,000 square foot lot.]

**Time Frame:** Within three months of Plan adoption.

**Program R-3-3:** The City shall rezone the RM - 1.5, RM - 3.5, etc. properties to the appropriate “Higher Density Multi-Family” or “Lower Density Multi-Family” zoning districts.

**Time Frame:** Within nine months of Plan adoption.

## **Minimum Setback & Maximum Height for All Conventional Single-Family & Multi-Family Zoning Districts**

As homes have gotten larger, they have generally been built closer to the property lines and the heights have increased. This has reduced the setbacks between structures and has resulted in intrusions into the privacy previously enjoyed by adjacent property owners. The historic setback regulations were a fixed number of feet which is established solely based upon the zoning district in which the parcel is located. Because of the nature of the residential neighborhoods in Mill Valley, there is often considerable variation in lot size within a neighborhood and zoning district. In addition, because the setback standards vary, it was necessary to check the table every time zoning information was given out to the public.

As an alternative to the historic approach (based solely on the zoning district in which the parcel is located), this Plan specifies that the City will utilize a sliding scale minimum “Interior Yard” setback based on the parcel size in all conventional single- and multi-family zoning districts. This setback standard would be one foot setback for each 1,000 square foot of lot area to a maximum of 15 feet in all single-family zoning districts, and ten feet in all multi-family districts.

This Plan also establishes a two-tier 25 foot/35 foot approach to the maximum permitted height for all single-family and multi-family parcels. This approach expands the “wedding cake” concept that was first incorporated into the City Zoning Ordinance in 1985. It allows the equivalent of a two story building at the specified setback line with any three story portion of a home required to be set back twice all minimum required setbacks.

**Policy R-4:** The City shall utilize a sliding scale minimum “Interior Yard” (side and rear yard) setback standard for all conventional Single- Family and Multi-Family zoning districts which requires a one-foot setback for each 1,000 square feet of lot area to a maximum of 15 feet in single-family districts and ten feet in multi-family districts.

**Program R-4-1:** The City will amend the Municipal Code to specify that, unless variance findings can be made, the minimum “Interior Yard” (side and rear yard) setbacks in all conventional single-family and multi-family zoning districts shall be one foot per 1,000 square feet of lot area (excluding any driveway or roadway easements) to a maximum of 15 feet in single-family districts, and ten feet in multi-family districts.



[For example, the minimum interior yard setbacks would be eight feet for an 8,000 square foot single- or multi-family zoned lot, 12 feet for a 12,000 square foot single-family lot, and ten feet for a multi-family lot and 15 feet for either a 20,000 or 45,000 square foot single-family lot.]

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan approval.

The minimum “Exterior Yard” (street frontage) setbacks in all zoning districts will continue to be 15 feet.

**Program R-4-2:** The City will determine the minimum setbacks of buildings in all Planned Residential zoning districts through the Design Review process.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as plans are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

**Policy R-5:** The City shall utilize a two-step “wedding cake” height limit in all conventional single-family and multi-family zoning districts which specifies that any residential building or portion of a residential building located between required minimum setback lines and a distance which is twice all required setbacks may extend up to 25 feet above the natural grade. A residential building or portion of a residential building located more than twice all required setbacks may extend up to 35 feet above the natural grade.

**Program R-5-1:** The City will amend the Municipal Code to specify that, unless variance findings can be made, the maximum height of any structures in all conventional single-family & multi-family zoning districts shall not exceed 25 feet above the natural grade. However, any structures, or portions of structures, located twice all required setbacks may be a maximum of 35 feet above the natural grade.

[For example, a single-family home on a 8,000 square foot lot could be up to 25 feet high if at least eight feet from interior property line(s) and up to 35 feet high if at least 16 feet from interior property line(s) and at least 30 feet from the exterior property line(s), a house on a 12,000 square foot parcel could be up to 25 feet high if at least 12 feet from interior property line(s) and up to 35 feet high if located at least 24 feet from interior property line(s) and at



least 30 feet from an exterior property line(s), and a house on an 18,000 square foot lot could be up to 25 feet high if at least 15 feet from interior property line(s) and up to 35 feet high if at least 30 feet from interior property line(s) and 30 feet from exterior property line(s).]

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.

**Program R-5-2:** The City will continue to implement the existing height provisions of the Municipal Code which specify that the maximum height of any structures in all Planned Residential zoning districts shall not exceed 30 feet above the natural grade, subject to Design Review approval or any more restrictive limit imposed as a condition of a Master Plan approval.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as plans are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

## Summary

The residential building intensity standards contained in this portion of the General Plan involve a totally new approach to many of the basic zoning restrictions in the City. They are intended not only to address the problems which were identified with the previous regulations but also to do so in a way that should be considerably easier to convey to the public. The recommended regulations create a relatively simple three-tier approach to determining the maximum size of new homes or multi-family projects and additions to existing buildings in all conventional residential zoning districts: Single-Family - 35 percent adjusted F.A.R. for lots up to 8,000 square feet in size, then a sliding scale based upon five percent of the lot area plus 2,500 square feet; Lower Density Multi-Family - 35 percent adjusted F.A.R.; and Higher Density Multi-Family - 40 percent adjusted F.A.R. Under this approach all basic residential zoning restrictions, with the exception of minimum lot size for purposes of subdivision, are based on the size of the parcel and can be easily calculated. One of the goals, which was accomplished by these recommendations, was to develop a “tableless” and “graphless” set of basic residential zoning regulations for the City.

Given the diversity that exists in a community like Mill Valley, there is no single formula that will fit every situation and guarantee that all new homes and additions to existing homes are appropriately sized, designed and sited for and respect the environmental sensitivity of every site. This can only be achieved through a subjective review process. The building intensity standards described in this section of the Plan should, however, considerably narrow the scope of the recent debate and should provide a better indication to everyone involved in the planning process (applicants, realtors, prospective purchasers, neighbors, staff, the Design Review Committee, Planning Commission and City Council) as to what the City of Mill Valley considers to be a generally appropriate level of development for any particular residential parcel.

#### **2.3.4 Large Undeveloped Residential Properties**

##### **Background**

Mill Valley has relatively few large, undeveloped residentially zoned parcels with subdivision potential remaining within the City. They comprise a total of approximately 290 acres and were all previously zoned Planned Residential (RP). These properties for the most part represent the sections of town that were passed over as the more readily developable properties were developed. Most have significant on-site environmental constraints such as areas of geologic instability, steep slopes and high fire hazard, and many include ridgelines or open grassy hillsides of high scenic value. In addition, most are also located in areas of town that have significant off-site limitations on their development potential, such as inadequate utilities, limited access options, substandard roads, excessive emergency service response time and inadequate sewer and drainage infrastructure. **Figure 2.2** indicates the general location of these parcels.

Through this General Plan revision process, the community has been able to analyze the cumulative impacts which could result from the buildout of all of these properties. During this process, policies regarding the appropriate type, location, and number of units were developed for the future use of all privately-owned parcels if they are not acquired for public open space. Section 2.7, Open Space, of this Plan specifically identifies which of these properties are recommended for outright public acquisition. However, the following land use policies specify that even if the properties are developed, large portions of most of them can still be permanently preserved as open space and still preserve reasonable development rights.

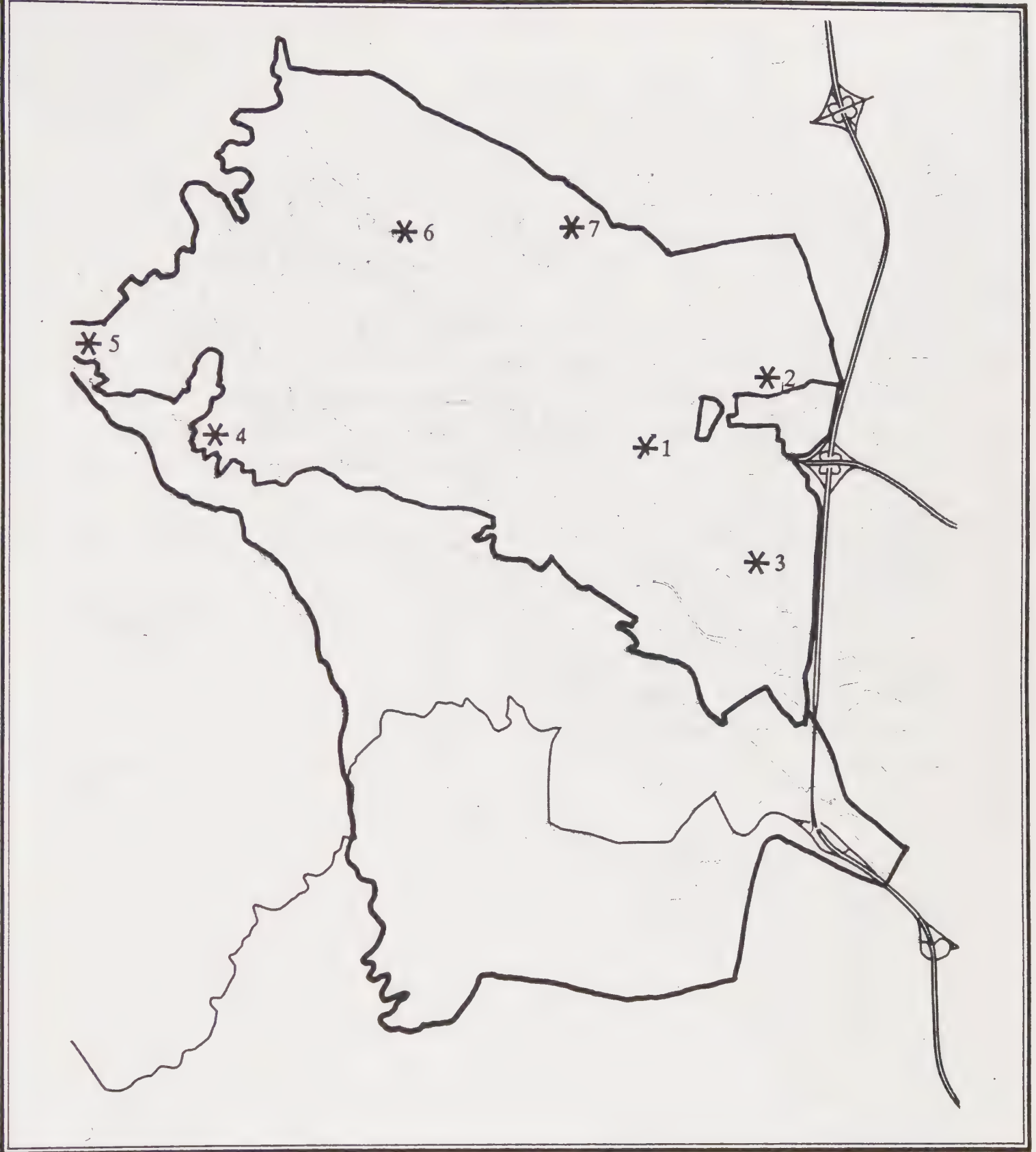


Figure 2.2

1. Kite Hill
2. Alto Hill
3. Shelter Ridge
4. Gladish Property
5. Gordon Ridge
6. Rider Ridge
7. Warner Ridge

## Large Undeveloped Residential Parcels

# Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates







## Process

In undertaking this portion of the General Plan revision, the Steering Committee, assisted by consultants and staff, used a three-stage approach to develop land use policies for the ultimate appropriate buildout potential for these properties.

First, the Committee held a series of meetings to consider the various issues associated with the development of the properties. During these meetings, issues such as drainage, flooding, geologic problems, wildfire hazard, traffic concerns, visual impacts and the need to preserve reasonable development rights to the owners were discussed at length. The purpose was to provide a community-wide overview of these important land use issues.

The Steering Committee next undertook a comprehensive review of each of the individual properties including a number of field trips to the parcels. All of the members of the Committee visited each of the sites at least once and, in some cases, made repeated visits. Where planning studies had been prepared or development proposals had been submitted in the past, relevant information was reviewed. This information included Master Plan applications, supporting documentation, project EIR's, and other studies such as Land Capacity Reports. After reviewing this information as well as summary environmental evaluation checklists prepared for each parcel, the Committee agreed on alternative land use options. These alternatives were then the subject of four community forums.

During this portion of the process, each property owner was invited to describe his or her desired development concept. These concepts, where the property owners made an effort to make them known to the City, were then included in the alternatives reviewed by the Committee. Through articles in the local newspaper and a community newsletter sent to all local residents, the range of possible land use alternatives received wide publicity. The community forums on these alternatives were well attended and involved a great deal of public input and broad debate.

During the third stage in the process, developing the recommended land use policies for the properties, the Committee utilized a twofold approach. First, they sought to develop a thorough understanding of the particular attributes and development possibilities and constraints for each individual parcel. Second, they sought to arrive at recommendations from a General Plan

perspective. That is, recommendations reflecting community views about the cumulative development of all of the lands were considered collectively rather than treating them as separate decisions on individual development proposals. The blending of the two approaches is reflected in the final land use policies.

### **Recommended Land Use Policies**

From the statements at the public hearings, community forums, and the large volume of correspondence received by the City during this process, it was clear that there was a strong community concern about a number of matters that were repeatedly mentioned: increasing traffic, the difficulty (or impossibility) of widening streets sufficiently to ease traffic congestion, safety on congested streets, difficulties of access to some of the properties, drainage problems, dangers of increased flooding in adjacent low-lying neighborhoods, visual impacts, and public safety and city liability risks created by landslide and other geologic hazards.

In determining the appropriate use of the former RP properties, a strong emphasis was placed on protecting the public safety and preserving the natural resources of the community while still permitting individual property owners to realize reasonable development potentials. The general approach during this portion of the plan revision process was to acknowledge the identified environmental constraints as limitations on development rather than trying to identify the extensive mitigation measures such as street widening, intersection signalization, or downstream channelization projects which would be neither acceptable to existing residents nor, because of the limited undeveloped land remaining in the community, economically feasible to implement. This approach has the additional benefit of reducing on- and off-site mitigation fees which would otherwise have to be borne by the property owners.

The following land use policies for these properties uniformly propose relatively low density residential development. In virtually every case, the policies allow fewer--often far fewer homes than sought in prior development proposals. Some may express concern about these recommendations because, although they involve low density and have thus attempted to minimize impacts on traffic and views, they do so at a price. The price is that if there are fewer residences, they will be at least somewhat more expensive than might be the case with higher densities. While there was no strong community interest expressed in seeing only expensive

housing, realistically, it is not possible to provide anything approaching low or moderate income housing on any of the former RP parcels except at densities that would so aggravate traffic and result in other impacts as to be unacceptable to the community. It is, however, anticipated that under the City's current inclusionary housing requirements, the new homes on these properties will be contributing in-lieu housing fees to facilitate the development of affordable housing elsewhere in the community either on infill sites or vacant school sites. Since affordable housing will not be developed on these properties, then implementation of the other housing programs in the Housing Element of the General Plan become more important than ever before.

Because of the location, visibility and proximity to other homes, all new homes constructed on the former RP zoned properties should be subject to Design Review. Through the Design Review process the precise location, size, scale, massing, height, colors, materials and the appropriateness of the home design to the slope and topography shall be determined.

The following land use policies are the result of the comprehensive analysis that took place. They indicate the type, location and number of housing units appropriate for each of the properties. These policies replace those in the 1975 General Plan and, because they are relatively specific, obviate the need for the previously required Land Capacity Reports on these properties. Under the land use policies contained in the Plan, complete buildout of the 290 acres previously zoned RP would involve the construction of 85 additional units (79 single-family homes and 6 condominiums).

### **Kite Hill Area**

Kite Hill, an open, grassland hillside visible from many points in Mill Valley, has long been a community landmark. With a total of 64.3 acres, this area consists of property held by four landowners and is made up of seven separate legal parcels. Joint development of the three largest parcels is preferred over separate site development because clustering housing units could reduce the visual impacts of the new homes, increase the size of the areas of contiguous permanent open space and lower site development costs for the property owners. Land use policies for independent development of the sites, as well as for coordinated development of the three largest parcels are presented below.





- **Sievert West Property** (Assessor Parcels: 29-231-12; 33-101-12)

Located on the upper portion of Kite Hill adjacent to the Northridge subdivision, the 6.08 acre site currently contains one single-family residence. This portion of the hill is a highly visible, exposed ridgetop, with the southern exposure visible from many areas within Mill Valley and as far away as Waldo Grade. The north side of the ridge is also visible from portions of Mill Valley, including the Hillside and Elinor Avenues areas. This site provides a significant wildlife corridor from the grasslands on the remainder of Kite Hill to the oak woodland on the adjacent Northridge open space lands. Some areas include very steep gullies and there are minor areas of instability on the northwest side of the ridge. The center portion of the ridge was previously graded to bedrock.

The site is bordered on the north by the Northridge single family neighborhood, on the east by the Marin Municipal Water District storage tank, and on the remaining sides by the vacant “Silberberg” and “Gomez West” parcels which each have development potential for two houses and a portion of the Northridge open space lands. The only existing legal access to the site is from Escalon Drive, a two-lane, 24’ to 34’ wide paved roadway with parking permitted on both sides. This roadway ends at a fire gate at the property line.

The northwest portion of the site drains to Warner Creek and the southeast portion of the site drains to Ryan Creek. Sewer and water facilities are both available for the area close to the end of Escalon. Homes located elsewhere on the property would have to have their sewage pumped uphill into the sewer line in Escalon. Fire Hazard is extremely high on some portions of the site where the ravines would funnel a fire, creating a “chimney effect.” Improvements should be kept away from these areas and residential fire sprinklers will be required for any new home.

**Policy R-6:** This property is appropriate for one additional single-family detached home located at the entrance to the property fronting on a new cul-de-sac terminus of Escalon. During the review of this new home, special efforts should be made to minimize the visual impact through careful siting, limiting the mass of the home and possibly restricting its height to one story. The remainder of the property should be preserved as permanent open space and an access easement should be obtained from the end of Escalon to the adjacent Northridge open space lands.

**Program R-6-1:** The Sievert West property should be zoned RSP-3A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per three acres.)

- **Khosropanah Property** (Assessor Parcels: 30-021-06, 34)

This 8.10 acre site is located on the lower portion of Kite Hill. The most visible portions of the site are the hillside and knoll above the Camino Alto and East Blithedale intersection. Vegetation consists principally of grassland with a small area of oak woodland on the western edge of the site. The most geologically stable portion of the property is the top of the knoll. A majority of the site, 4.9 acres, consists of slopes with grades between 21 and 40 percent.

Surrounding land uses include a church, a commercial office building and single-family homes. The currently vacant “Sievert East” parcel is adjacent to the north and has a development potential of two single-family homes. The only access to this site is either via Alta Vista Avenue, a narrow, paved public right-of-way which is not a city-maintained street, or Altamont, a private, 20 foot wide street with unrestricted on-street parking. Much additional traffic on either of these streets would significantly change the character of the residential neighborhoods.

While water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage facilities are available in Altamont, only water service is available in Alta Vista. Fire hazard is a concern on the site as the “chimney effect” could occur in the ravines and, as a result, homes should be kept away from these areas.

**Policy R-7:** This property is appropriate for three single-family detached homes located on the western four acres near the end of Alta Vista Avenue. If this parcel has legal access, at least one of the homes should take access off Altamont Avenue. The more visible eastern four acres should be preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots as common open area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City).

**Program R-7-1:** The Khosropanah property should be zoned RSP-2.5A; (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per two and one-half acres.)

- **Gomez West Property** (Assessor Parcel: 33-101-18)

This 13.65 acre site has severe topographic and geologic constraints that restrict future development potential. There are major areas of slope instability in the site's ravines which may be activated by cut and fill, or by build-up of groundwater flow. Surface erosion and soil conditions have resulted in severe gullies and soil creep. 50 percent (6.7 acres) of the site consists of slopes between 21 and 40 percent grade and 45 percent (6.2 acres) consists of slopes in excess of 40 percent. Vegetation in the two ravines upstream from the Mesa/Alta Vista intersection includes a few willow trees in the eastern drainage and a more complex association of live oak, bay, blackberry, broom and other understory species in the western drainage. This latter plant association is similar to riparian woodland, a unique, valuable, and rapidly disappearing vegetation type in California. The remainder of the site is covered with scrub and grassland with small areas of oak woodland. Because much of the site is a valley landform, the lower portions of the site are only visible from the immediate neighborhoods, while the upper portions of the site are visible from much of the lower portions of Mill Valley and from as far away as Waldo Grade.

The site is surrounded by both the "Sievert West and East" parcels which have a development potential of one additional home and two houses respectively and existing single-family neighborhoods. The only access to this parcel is from Mesa and Alta Vista, paved roads which carry two-way traffic but are sub-standard in width.

Site drainage is also a significant constraint to future development, as storm water drains into the Mesa Avenue/Altamont by-pass systems which have only limited capacity. Water, sewer and storm drainage facilities are available in Mesa Avenue. Only water service is currently available in Alta Vista. Fire hazard on this parcel is extreme, as the site's ravines create a "chimney effect" and could funnel fires to the ridgelines. As a result, these areas should be kept free of improvements.

**Policy R-8: The Gomez West property is appropriate for two single-family homesites located on the hillside above Alta Vista east of Mesa. The remainder of the property, including the valley at the end of Mesa and the steep hillside areas that ring the upper end of the valley, should be preserved as permanent open space (either as part of the individual lots, as common open area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City).**



**Program R-8-1:** The Gomez West property should be zoned RSP-5A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per five acres.)

- **Gomez East Property** (Assessor Parcel: 33-101-17)

Located on the easternmost portion of Kite Hill, above Camino Alto, this 17.10 acre hillside site is highly visible from the East Blithedale entrance to Mill Valley and from other hillsides to the east. Stability problems and existing landslides in ravines limit this site's development potential. Unique concentrations of native plant species (poppies and golden violets) have been identified in the southwest corner of the site near the church property. Scotch broom is rapidly invading the grassland area, reducing the diversity of vegetation that currently provides a rich wildlife habitat.

Adjacent land uses include the Northridge and Scott Valley single family residential neighborhoods, a church, the Marin Municipal Water District storage tank site and the vacant "Sievert East" parcel which has a development potential of two single-family homes. While the site has extensive frontage on Camino Alto, access onto this relatively steep, curving arterial roadway is considered to be an additional development constraint. The only appropriate access point to this property is located uphill from the Azalea intersection with Camino Alto which will require the construction of new left and right turn lanes. Because of the characteristics of Camino Alto at this point, special care should be taken in designing these left and right turn lanes to minimize traffic hazards and maximize vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Since the site drains into the Scott Valley by-pass and some of the connecting facilities are not currently considered to be adequate, some off-site drainage improvements will be required. MMWD maintains a ten foot wide right-of-way through the property which contains a very shallow pipe which would have to be relocated if development occurs in the area. Water service is currently available below the 200 foot elevation. Above this point, development would need to be served by the Sarah Drive system which now serves the Scott Highlands and Northridge subdivisions. The "chimney effect" in the on-site ravines creates a high fire hazard for any homes constructed in the area.



**Policy R-9:** The Gomez East parcel is appropriate for eleven single-family detached homes located on the southern ten and one-half acres of the property. During the review process, special design guidelines should be developed for this hillside area to minimize potential impacts of building heights, massing, colors, roofshapes and architectural character. The remaining six and one-half acres, consisting of the southwest corner of the property and the northern third of the property located closest to the Northridge subdivision, should be preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots, as common open area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City).

**Program R-9-1:** The Gomez East property should be zoned RSP-1.5A (Residential Single-Family Planned District: one home per one and one-half acres.)

- **Sievert East (formerly Hanf) Property** (Assessor Parcels: 30-131-08; 33-101-05)

This 11.3 acre site is located in the center portion of Kite Hill, and extends from the end of Alta Vista to the MMWD parcel. Its open grassy slopes are by far the most highly visible portion of Kite Hill from the flat land areas of Mill Valley to as far away as Waldo Grade. Because the entire parcel is the ridgeline, the slopes are relatively stable and flat. On-site vegetation primarily consists of grassland.

A church is located adjacent to the site, with the remaining frontage being vacant parcels including “Gomez East” with a potential for 11 homes, “Khosropanah” with three homes and “Gomez West” with two homes, as well as the MMWD water storage site. The only existing access to the site is from the end of Alta Vista, a narrow, paved public right-of-way which is currently not a City-maintained street. Any increase in traffic would change the character of this roadway.

Only water service is available in Alta Vista. Other utilities would have to be extended from Mesa. The site is divided into two watersheds: the eastern portion drains to Richardson Bay via the Scott Valley by-pass and the western portion drains via the Altamont by-pass. Fire hazard is a concern particularly on the upper portion of the site, where the “chimney effect” could rapidly destroy any homes or other improvements.

**Policy R-10:** The Sievert East property is appropriate for two single-family detached homes located on the lower four acres of the property with access from Alta Vista. Because of the potential visual impact of any homes constructed on this property, special efforts should be made through the review process to minimize their visual impact through careful siting, limiting the mass of the homes and possibly restricting their height to one story. The upper 7-1/2 acres should be preserved as permanent open space (either as part of the individual lots, as common area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the city).

**Program R-10-1:** The Sievert East property should be zoned RSP-5A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per five acres.)

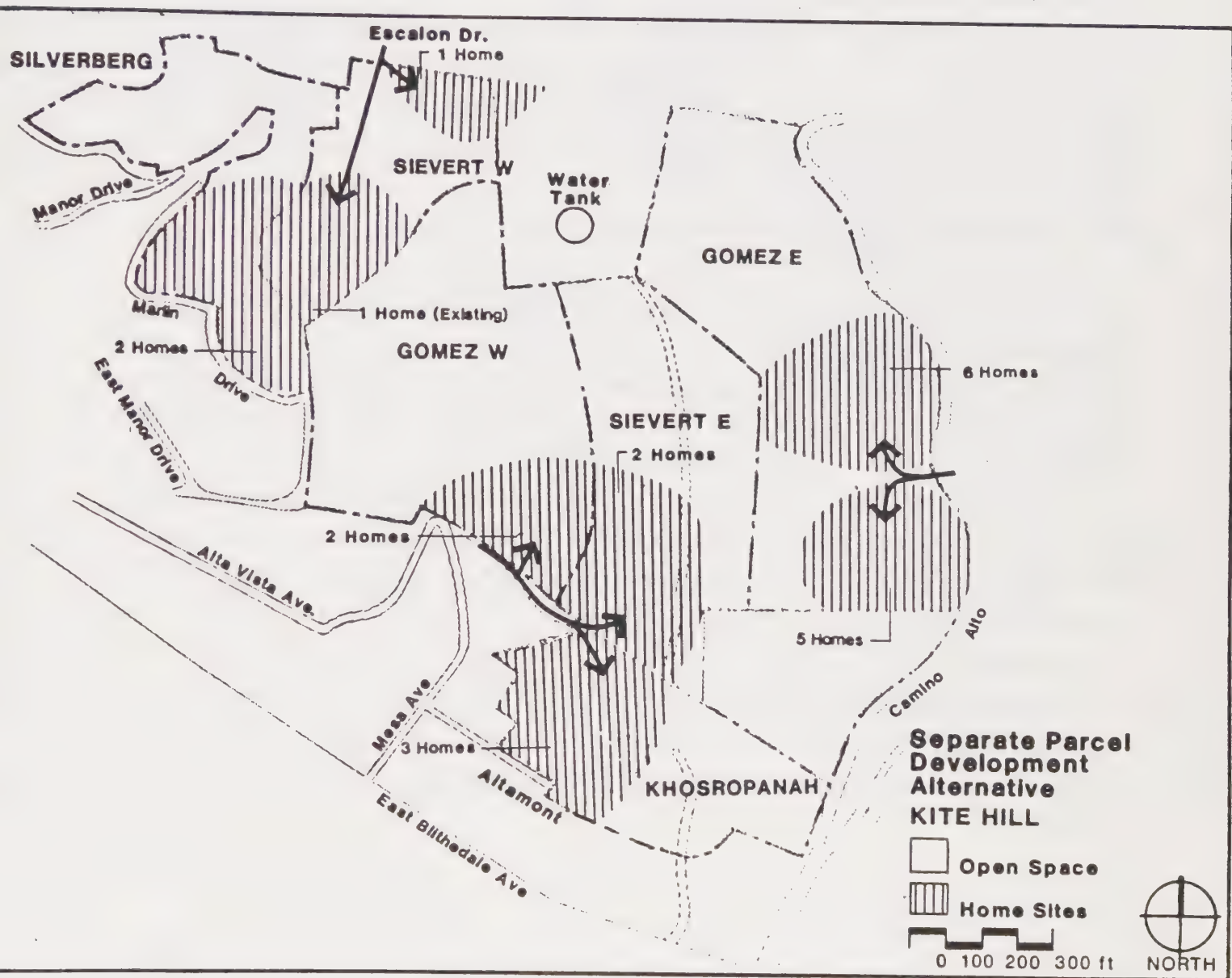
- **Silberberg Property** (Assessor Parcels: 29-231-04, 08, 14)

Located on the westernmost flank of Kite Hill, above Marlin Drive, these three parcels comprise two separate legal building sites which total eight acres. Upper portions of the site are highly visible from many areas within the City. The site contains some unstable ravines, and has 3.4 acres in slopes of between 21 and 40 percent grade and 4.6 acres with slopes in excess of 40 percent. Three acres contain native bunchgrass, with the remainder of the site covered with grassland scrub and oak woodland.

Two sides of the property abut developed single-family residential areas and to the north lies the County Open Space District lands and to the east is the “Sievert West” parcel with a development potential for one additional home. Access to the site is a major constraint, as Marlin and Manor are both narrow, steep, unpaved hillside roads in poor condition. Major roadway improvements would be required to accomodate much additional traffic. Access to utilities is also a constraint, as utilities are not currently available for the southern portion of the site. The central portion of the site contains a ravine which could pose a fire hazard because of the “chimney effect.”

**Policy R-11:** The Silberberg property is appropriate for one single-family detached home on each of the two largest parcels or two single-family detached homes located on the eastern parcel with the western parcel being retained as permanent open space. The latter alternative is preferred.

**Program R-11-1:** The Silberberg property should be zoned RSP-3A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per three acres.)





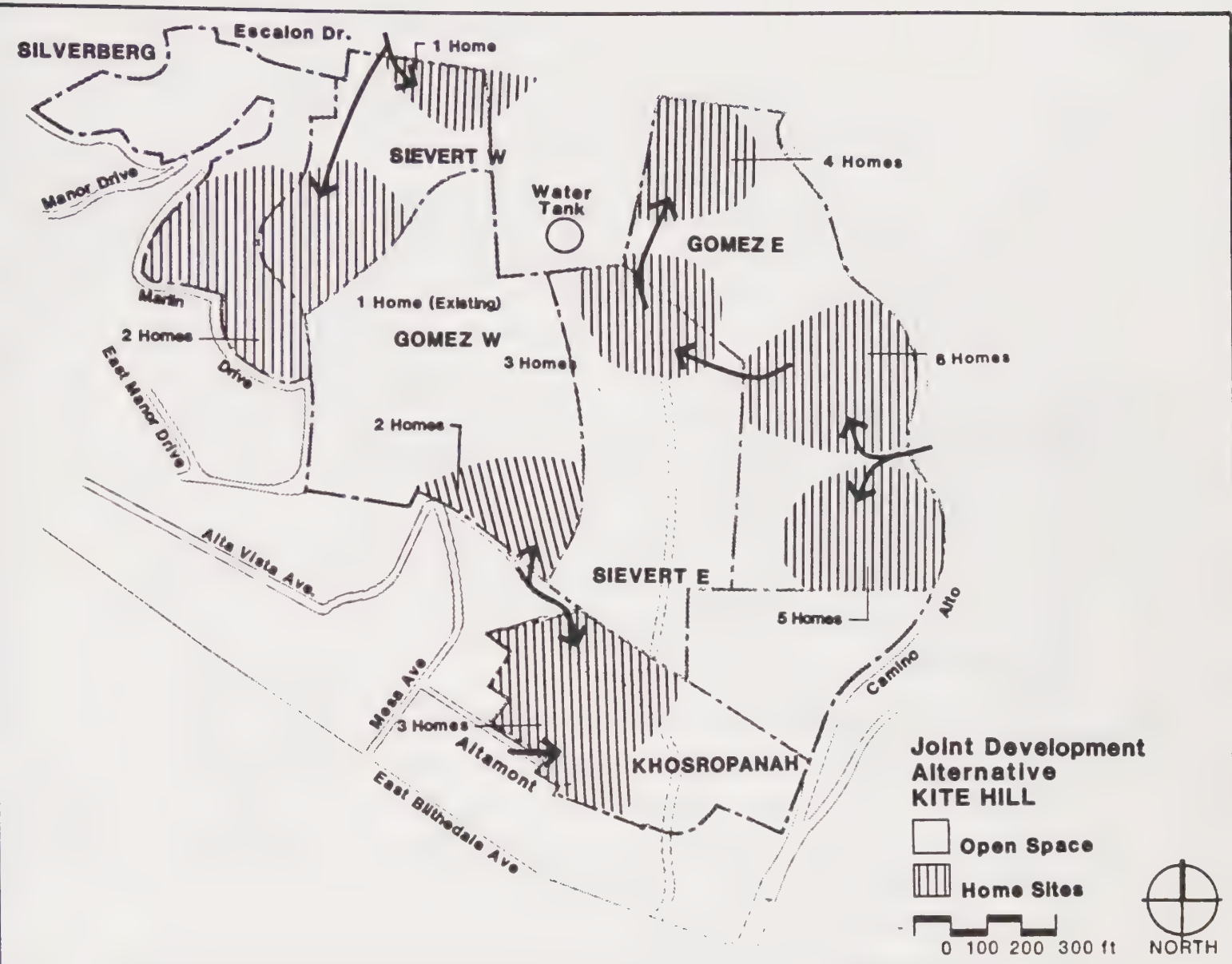
- **Preferred Alternative: Joint Development of the Gomez West, Gomez East and Sievert East Properties** (Assessor Parcels: 33-101-05, 17, 18; 30-131-08)

**Policy R-12:** Joint development of the three largest parcels comprising 42 acres, with all of the homes located on approximately 17 acres above Camino Alto is preferred over independent development of these parcels. Through this joint development option, approximately 25 acres of Kite Hill consisting of the valley at the end of Mesa, the steep hillsides that ring it and a majority of the ridgeline can be preserved as permanent open space. In exchange for an offer of dedication to the City of this open space, the property owners would obtain a three unit density bonus which would increase from 15 to 18 the total number of units located on the 42 acres. The homes and the open space would be located as shown on the following map.

This joint development option allows access to all of the homes on the 42 acres to occur off Camino Alto and would leave only the three homes on the Khosrapanah property which would take access off the Alta Vista/Altamont/Mesa road system. Through the review process special efforts should be made to minimize the visual impact of the three homes located closest to the MMWD water tank parcel through careful siting, limiting the mass of the homes and possibly restricting the height of the homes to one story. In addition, appropriate landscape screening shall be installed and adequate setbacks shall be established along the Camino Alto frontage in order to minimize the visual impact of the new homes on the existing semi-rural character of this roadway.

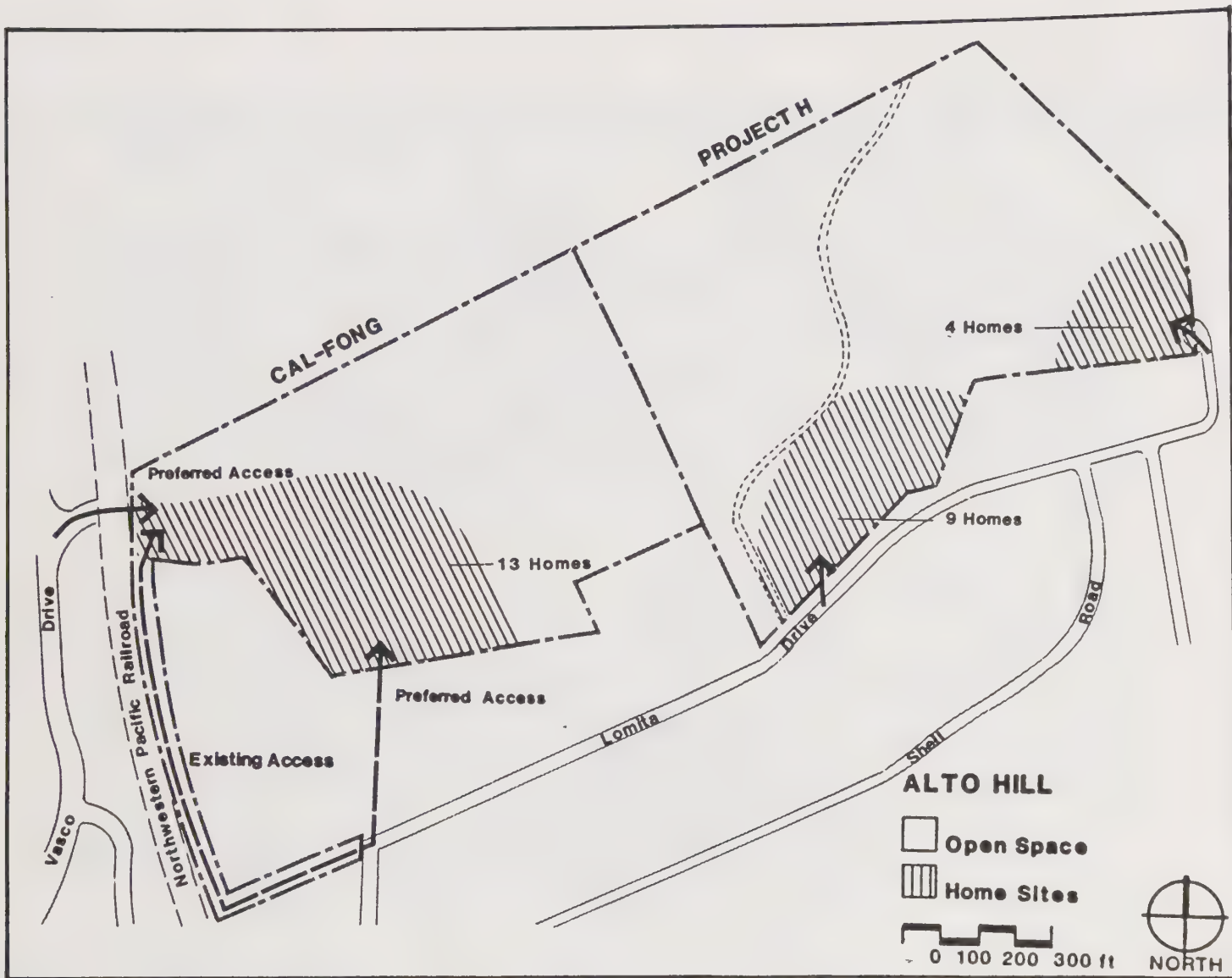
**Program R-12-1:** The properties should be zoned as recommended above, for the individual properties with density transfers occurring from one parcel to another and a density bonus for the offer of dedication of the open space approved through the Master Plan process.





## Alto Hill Area

This area is an important visual landmark in the eastern portion of Mill Valley with its large expanse of exposed grassland slopes. Over the years, Alto Hill has been used by Mill Valley residents for hiking and for the grazing of horses. Because of the long term horse grazing which has occurred on its grassy slopes, the area is also commonly referred to as "Horse Hill." It consists of 60.7 acres of undeveloped land that is currently under two separate ownerships.



- **Project H** (Assessor Parcel: 33-102-28)

Forming the eastern 34.42 acres of the hill adjacent to Highway 101, this parcel consists of heavily grazed rangeland with a small area of oak woodland in the northwestern corner and an area previously disturbed by quarrying in the southeast corner of the site. Because portions of the site are highly visible from numerous locations, including Highway 101, it is an important visual resource for both the City of Mill Valley and Marin County. Steep slopes and a major area with landslide potential form a central band across the site and present constraints to future development.

The site is bordered on the north by the open space and south by single-family residential areas (Scott Valley Meadows Subdivision to the north and an area with RS-6 zoning and the unincorporated Alto area to the south), Highway 101 to the east, and on the west by the remainder of the Alto Hill, the now vacant Cal Fong site which has development potential for 13 single-family homes. The only access to the property is from Lomita Drive, which is a County street. Because of its location, auto traffic from the site would impact the already constrained Tower Drive/East Blithedale intersection.

The site drains to a County-maintained storm water system on Lomita Drive which is currently deemed to be inadequate. As a result, special on- and off-site drainage mitigation measures will be required. Water service is currently available to the 210 foot elevation, above which a higher pressure system would be required to provide both fire protection and domestic service. Additionally, sewer service would need to be extended along Lomita Drive from Greenfield Court. Traffic noise is a major constraint, particularly along the eastern edge of the property. Because of the site's proximity to Highway 101, special mitigation measures to meet state and city noise standards for residential areas would be required. Two shell mounds of archaeological significance have been found on the site. These areas should be preserved with any development of the site.

**Policies R-13:** The Project H property is appropriate for thirteen single family detached homes with four located on two acres at the end of Lomita Drive and nine single-family detached homes located on a six acre area on the hillside above Lomita Drive east of Greenfield Court. During the review process, special design guidelines should be developed for the nine homes located on the hillside above Lomita Drive to minimize potential impacts of building heights, massing, colors, roof shapes and architectural character. The remaining 26-1/2 acres should be



preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots, as common open area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City or the County open space district. Depending upon the recommendations of a land management plan which should be prepared for this grassland open space area, some continued grazing by horses may be appropriate.

**Program R-13-1:** The Project H property should be zoned RSP-2.5A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per two and one-half acres.)

- **Cal Fong Property** (Assessor Parcel: 33-102-12, 31, 37, 38, 39, 40)

The environmental conditions of the 26.25 acre Cal-Fong Property are much the same as those found on the “Project H” parcel. Grazed grassland covers a majority of the site, however a wooded area along the northern border includes California bay and live oak trees. Portions of the site above elevations 100 to 125 feet are highly visible from many off-site vantage points. As with most of the ridgelines in Mill Valley the top of the ridge is relatively flat, with slopes between 0 and 20 percent. However, 54 percent of the site (14.14 acres) has slopes between 21 and 40 percent and 12 percent (3.39 acres) are in excess of 41 percent grade. The southeast corner of the site has been modified by previous grading and several springs and areas of soil creep and slumping limit the site’s development potential.

Land uses adjacent to the site include the Scott Valley Meadows single-family neighborhood to the north, Greenfield Court single-family subdivision and the now closed Alto/Edna Maguire Schools to the south. The vacant “Project H” parcel with a development potential of 13 single-family homes is located to the east, and an abandoned railroad right-of-way now is owned by the County Open Space district to the west. Access to the site is a major constraint. Legal access is currently only via a long “dog-leg” connection to Lomita Drive, a distance of 1,400 feet. While an alternate access point from Vasco Drive across the former railroad right-of-way may be possible, the parcel currently has no access rights across the County Open Space District property. Street widths and conditions in the area are adequate to support some additional traffic, however,



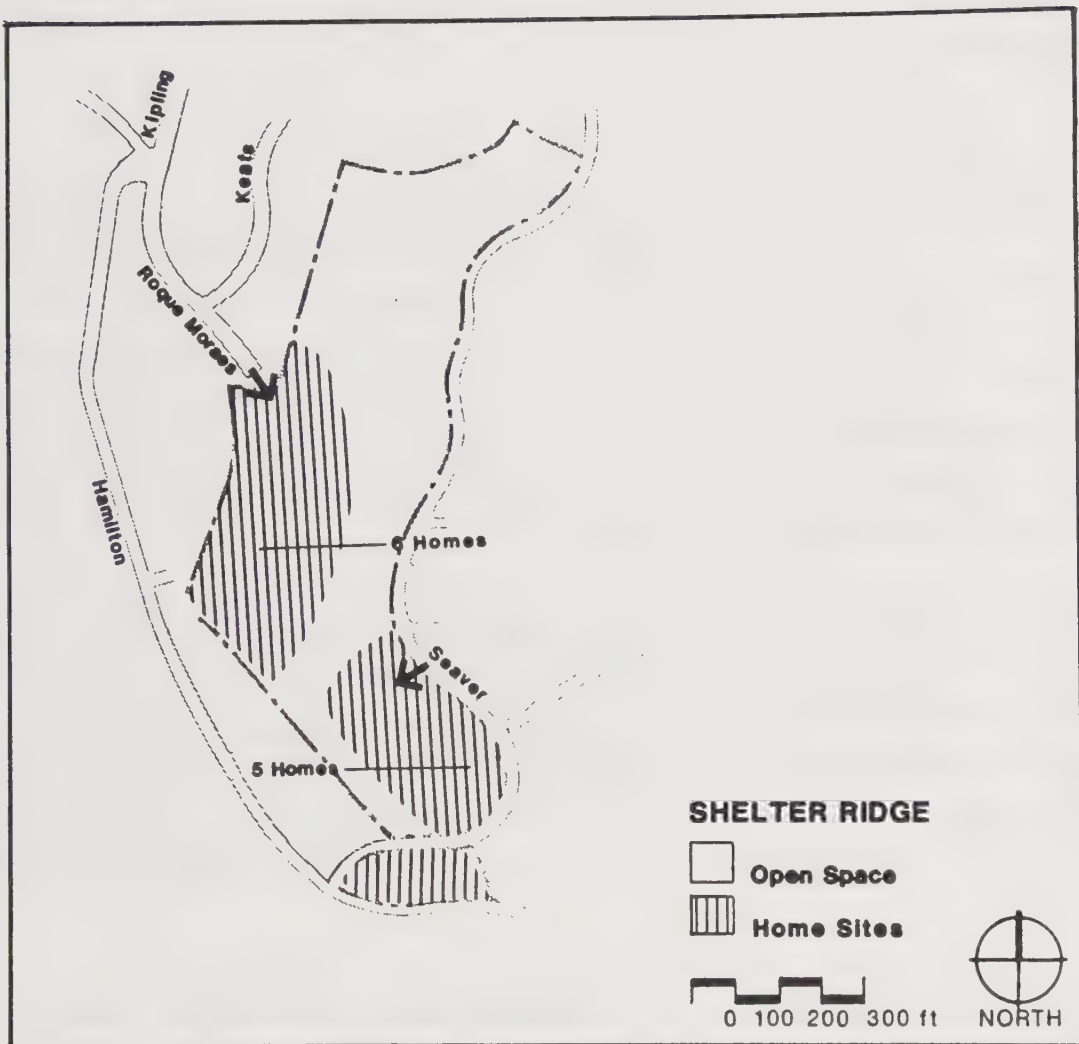
significantly increased traffic volumes would impact both the intervening residential neighborhoods and the East Blithedale/Camino Alto, East Blithedale/Ashford, and East Blithedale/Tower intersections.

As with the “Project H” parcel the site drains to the currently inadequate drainage channel along Lomita Drive. As a result, on and/or off-site drainage mitigation measures will be required. Water service below the 210 foot elevation is currently available. A new line would have to be extended to Von der Werth Way to serve portions of the site above this elevation. An underground gas transmission line crosses a portion of the site and restricts development in its vicinity. The fire hazard is high on the upper portion of the hill where the ravines could funnel a grass fire creating a “chimney effect.” Homes should be kept away from this area. One partially disturbed archaeological shell mound is located on the site. Any development plan should preserve this archaeological resource.

**Policy R-14:** The Cal-Fong property is appropriate for thirteen single-family detached homes located on a nine acre area behind the Alto-Edna Maguire School. The remaining 17 acre hillside portion of the property should be preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots as common area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City or the County Open Space District). Depending upon the recommendations of a land management plan which should be prepared for the grassland open space area, some continued grazing by horses may be appropriate.

Access to the homes would be either via the existing legal access on the “dog leg” around the school or preferably via one of the two following alternatives: (1) via a shorter, more direct, alignment across the school property between the Alto and Edna Maguire Schools traded to the school for the “dog leg;” or (2) from the end of Vasco, across the abandoned railroad right-of-way, with access rights being exchanged for a dedication of the 17-acre hillside portion of the property to the City or the Marin County Open Space District for permanent public open space.

**Program R-14-1:** The Cal-Fong property should be zoned RSP-2A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per two acres.)



### Shelter Ridge Area

The Shelter Ridge Area is located in the eastern portion of Mill Valley. It is surrounded by single-family, condominium and apartment development and overlooks Highway 101 and Richardson Bay. The area also includes Bayfront Park, Hauke Park and the City Public Safety Building. Three parcels formerly zoned RP are located in this area.

- **Eucalyptus Terrace** (Assessor Parcel: 30-211-27, 30, 31, 33, 38; 30-244-01)

Located on Shelter Ridge between Seaver Drive and the Public Safety Building, this 17.5 acre site contains steep slopes, expansive soils, and areas of seepage and active springs in the swales; all of which limit the site's development potential. Much of the site (52 percent) contains slopes greater than a 41 percent grade. Views to the site show an open, mostly grass-covered west-facing hillside that is highly visible from Tam Junction and most of the flatland areas of Mill Valley. However, from many locations, existing townhouse and condominium development can be seen in the background along the higher portions of the ridgetop.

To the east of the Eucalyptus Terrace site, along Seaver Drive, lies the Shelter Ridge Townhouse Development and the Shelter Hill low and moderate income apartment development. To the south of the property lies the Eucalyptus Knoll townhouse development, to the west is the Mill Valley Public Safety Building and located to the north is the Enchanted Knolls single-family residential neighborhood. The site has significant frontage (2,400 feet) along Seaver Drive on the east. Access from the west at the end of Roque Moraes is available, as well as an easement connection from Hamilton Drive just south of the Public Safety Building. Because of the traffic it carries, no units should back out directly onto Seaver Drive. Some freeway noise is evident at the southern end of the property.

The availability of utilities is not considered to be a constraint since all are available in the adjacent streets, with the possible exception of natural gas lines. The site drains almost directly into Richardson Bay. The seepage areas and active springs would require interceptor ditches and subsurface drainage systems in the event of development.

**Policy R-15:** Treating this site as an expansion of the Enchanted Knolls neighborhood, which occupies most of the rest of the west side of Shelter Ridge, the Eucalyptus Terrace property is appropriate for eleven single-family detached homes with five located on two and one-half acres of relatively flat ground above the intersection of Seaver and Hamilton and six located on four acres at the end of Roque Moraes on the hillside behind the Public Safety Building. The remaining 11 acres, including the grass covered hillside below Seaver Drive, should be preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots, as common area, or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City).



During the review process, design guidelines should be developed for this parcel to minimize potential impacts of building heights, massing, colors, roof shape and architectural design. Particular attention should be given to minimizing the visual impact of the five homes located at the southern end of the property through careful siting and possibly limiting the height of the homes to one story.

**Program R-15-1:** The Eucalyptus Terrace property should be zoned RSP-1.5A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per one and one-half acres.)

- **Northeast Corner of Seaver and Hamilton** (Assessor Parcels: 30-211-40, 41)

This 33,564 square foot site is relatively free of development constraints. It is generally flat, with no known geological constraints. It is not highly visible and is surrounded by existing development. Vegetation on the site has been disturbed by previous grading and therefore no sensitive habitats remain.

Surrounding land uses include the Shelter Hill Apartments to the northeast, the Shelter Bay condominiums to the south, Eucalyptus Knolls to the west, and vacant “Eucalyptus Terrace” Property to the north. Access to the site is via Seaver Drive only, since the property frontage on Hamilton Drive has a prohibitively steep cut bank. Because of the traffic it carries, no units should back directly onto Seaver Drive. Noise may be a minor constraint for residential use since the site faces the freeway. The site drains into Goodman Marsh, then into Richardson Bay. All utilities are available in the adjacent streets.

**Policy R-16:** The property located at the northeast corner of Seaver and Hamilton is appropriate for six condominium units with access via a single driveway connection to Seaver. The scale, massing and character of the condominiums should be compatible with the adjacent Eucalyptus Knolls townhouse units.

**Program R-16-1:** The property located at the northeast corner of Seaver and Hamilton should be zoned RMP-5.0 (Residential, Multi-Family Planned District: one unit per 5,000 square feet.)



- East Site of Kipling Between Seaver and East Blithedale (Assessor Parcel: 30-211-14)

This 3.45 acre parcel, located on the east side of Kipling above East Blithedale, is steep and heavily wooded. The average slope is approximately 40 percent. Adjacent uses are apartments across Kipling, the freeway right-of-way, the Shelter Ridge Townhouses and the Enchanted Knolls single-family neighborhood. Access is a major constraint in that Kipling is a steep, heavily used roadway with limited visibility.

**Policy R-17:** The property located on the east side of Kipling, between Seaver and East Blithedale is appropriate for three single-family detached homes with access via a single driveway connection to Kipling. In siting the improvements and designing the house, special efforts should be made to retain significant portions of the existing tree cover.

**Program R-17-1:** The property located on the east side of Kipling between Seaver and East Blithedale should be zoned RSP-1A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per acre.)

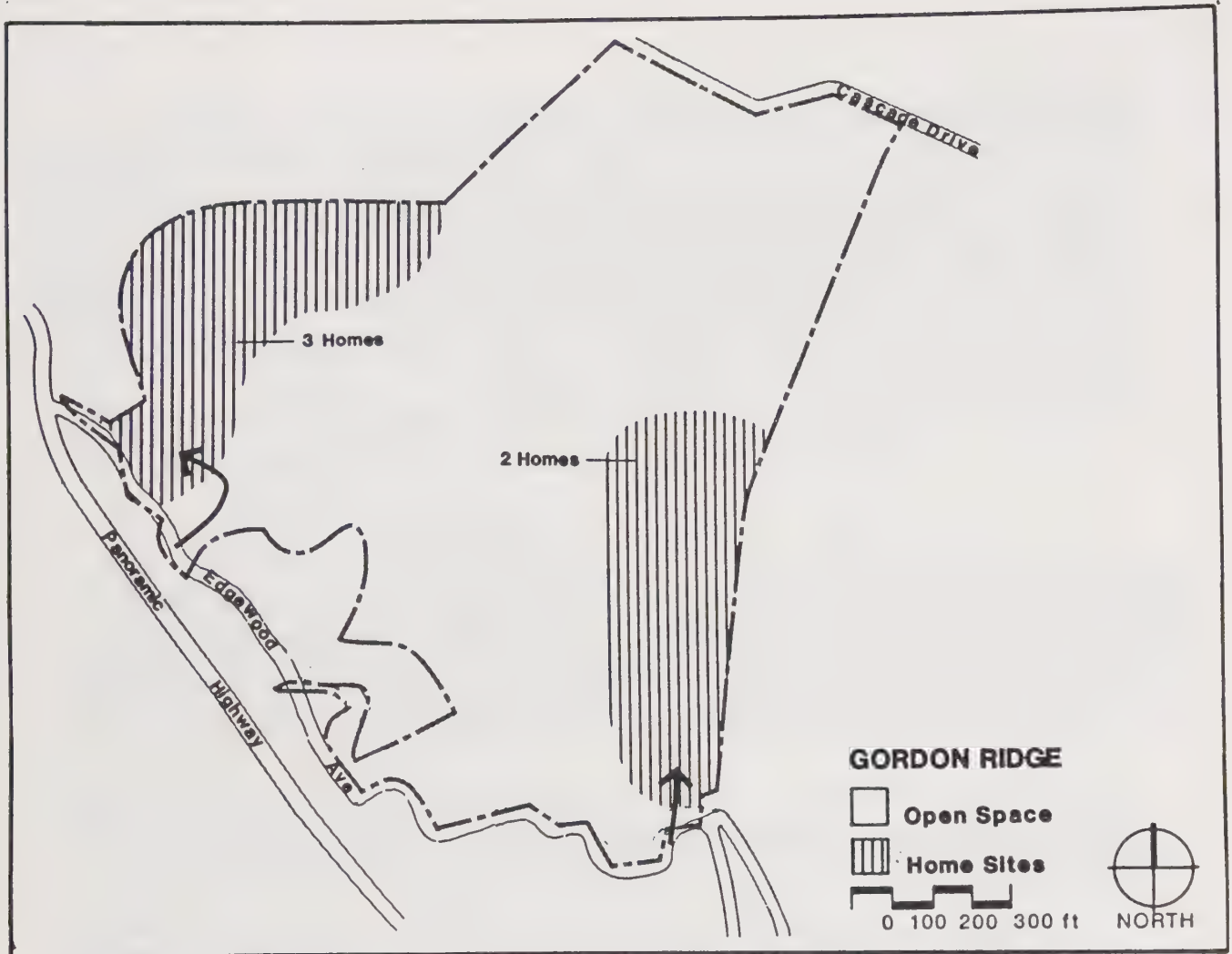
#### **Miscellaneous Former RP Parcels**

- Gladish Property (Assessor Parcel: 46-310-01)

This steep, heavily wooded 6.61 acre parcel is located on the downhill side of Edgewood Avenue near the end of the developed roadway. Driveway access and the availability of utilities are constraints to the development of this property.

**Policy R-18:** The Gladish property is appropriate for one single-family homesite with access off Edgewood Avenue.

**Program R-18-1:** The Gladish property should be zoned RSP-5A; Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per five acres.)



- **Gordon Property** (Assessor Parcels: 46-010-12, 22)

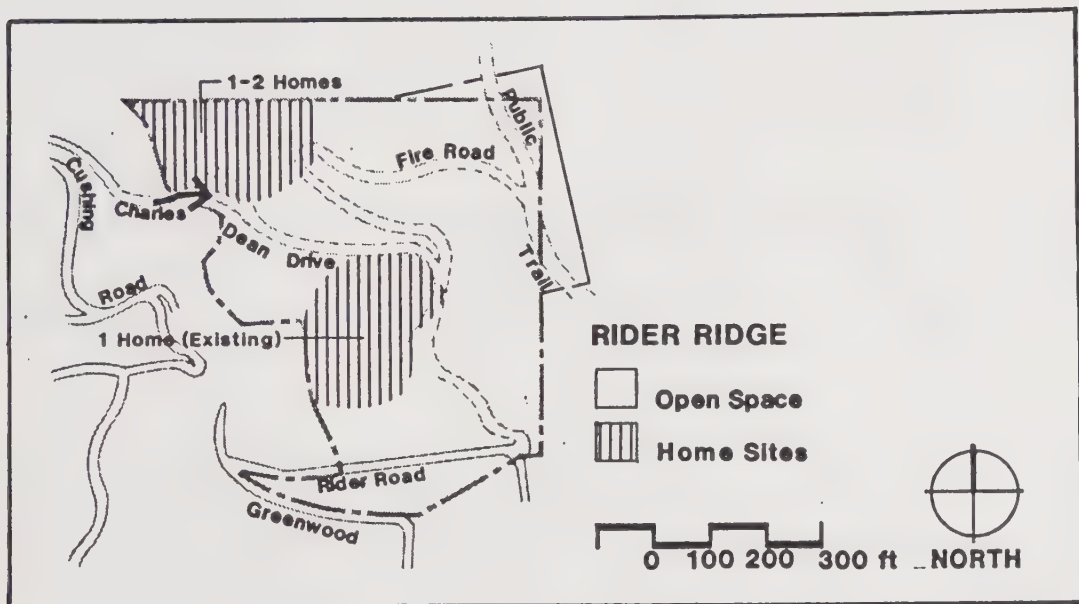
Visible from many locations within Mill Valley, this 57.3 acre parcel is located on the south face of Cascade Canyon near the Mountain Home Inn. The site has a major area of slope instability on its upper middle portion, and the upper portion has previously been disturbed by grading for roads and building pads. Much of the site is heavily wooded with redwoods and douglas fir trees. The topography of the site is extremely varied with flatter areas on ridgelines and a valley floor and steep ravines. Over 60 percent of the site has slopes in excess of 50 percent grade. The Zig-Zag Trail, an open space link between Mill Valley and Mt. Tam State Park crosses the site.

Surrounding land uses include single-family residential areas, Mt. Tam State Park, the Mountain Home Inn, City Open Space and vacant land. The property has access from two roads, Edgewood Avenue and, at the lower edge of the property, on Cascade Drive near the intersection with Lovell Avenue. Edgewood Avenue is the only feasible access point to the developable portions of the property. However, because of its unimproved condition, it does not have the capacity for traffic from many additional housing units.

Water and sewer services are available at Cascade Drive and Lovell Avenue and water service only is available in Edgewood. Although not located in a high fire hazard zone, the site has the longest emergency response time of any property located within the City and new residential development should be very limited.

**Policy R-19:** The Gordon property is appropriate for five estate size single-family homesites located on 25 acres at the upper south and southwest corners of the property with access off Edgewood Avenue. Through a lot line adjustment with the property owner's three adjacent legal building sites located on Edgewood Avenue outside the city limits, one additional homesite may be located on the City portion of this property. Because of the low density recommended and the anticipated cost to extend sewers to the home sites, use of individual sewage disposal systems may be appropriate. The home sites should be carefully selected so that the existing trees provide visual screening and the homes should incorporate designs, colors and massing compatible with their natural settings. The center and lower 32 acres of the property should be preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots, as common area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City or the County Open Space District). The existing heavily used trails located on and adjacent to the property should be permanently protected.

**Program R-19-1:** The Gordon property should be zoned RSP-10A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per ten acres.)



- **Rider Property** (Assessor Parcels: 29-011-16; 29-300-26, 27, 28)

This site is located along Blithedale Ridge and is highly visible from many off-site locations. The main parcel consists of 14.6 acres. The possible addition of three triangular parcels (which are not considered by the City to be separate building sites) consisting of 2.38 acres, would bring the total acreage to 16.98 acres. This site already contains an existing single-family home. The site contains a large unstable area in its central portion, shallow soils where it is difficult to establish cover and high erosion potential from new cuts in the land. While the site's ridgetops are relatively level, a majority of the property (13.8 acres) consists of slopes in excess of 40 percent. Vegetation consists of grassland near the top of Blithedale Ridge, wooded areas and extensive "domestic" landscaping around the existing house.



Adjacent land use includes County Open Space District lands and single-family homes. The site has access off Cushing Drive to the main house and to the interior fire roads. These roads are narrow and cannot accommodate much additional traffic.

Most of the site's storm water drains into the upper portion of the Blithedale Canyon watershed (Widow Reed Creek) and a small portion drains into Warner Creek watershed. The existing house has a private water system with uncertain water pressure. Sewer service is available in Greenwood Way and Cushing Drive, but lengthy new privately owned laterals to the site would be required. The site is not shown in a high fire hazard area; however, it would have long response times and questionable fire flow.

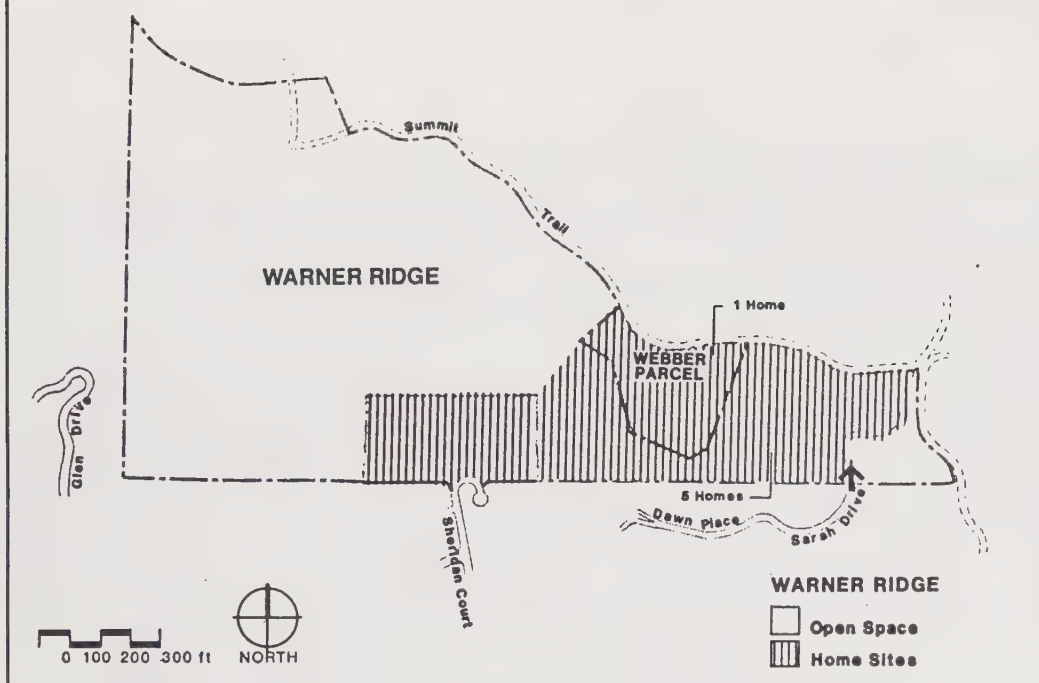
**Policy R-20: The following development alternatives are appropriate for the Rider Property:**

**Option 1: (Assumes one 14.60 acre parcel and three separate triangular parcels which are not residential building sites). This option would allow one additional single-family detached home located along the driveway extension of Cushing Drive near the entrance to the property.**

**Option 2: (Assumes one 16.98 acre parcel). This option would allow two additional single-family detached homes with one located as described above and one located below the switch-back in the fire road extension of Cushing Drive.**

**Under both alternatives the remainder of the property should be preserved as permanent open space and no homes should be built near the ridgeline portion of the property.**

**Program R-20-1: The Rider property should be zoned RSP-5A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per five acres.)**



- **Warner Ridge** (Assessor Parcels: 29-320-06, 19, 20)

Warner Ridge is a highly visible ridgeline which is an important part of the “community separator” between Mill Valley and Corte Madera. The site consists of 52.89 acres which is located above the Scott Highlands neighborhood. There are several areas of instability which are generally associated with the site’s drainageways. In addition, 26.5 acres have slopes in excess of 40 percent grade. Vegetation on the site consists of broadleaf evergreen forest, chaparral and grassland.

The site is adjacent to single-family residential areas within both Mill Valley and the City of Corte Madera, as well as County Open Space District lands. The only legal access to the site from the Mill Valley side is off the end of Sarah Drive which becomes a fire trail at the property boundary. The site currently does not have water service above 425 feet elevation. This constitutes a major constraint to development of this site since development above this elevation will require the construction of major new water storage and distribution facilities. Sewer water and electric services are available for the remainder of the site from Sarah Drive. Generally those portions of the site above 425 feet elevation are also located in a high fire hazard zone which should generally be kept free from development.

**Policy R-21:** The Warner Ridge property is appropriate for five estate size single-family homesites located on 13 acres at the eastern end of the property with access off the end of Sarah Drive. In order to maintain the existing community separation and avoid potential fire and police service problems, no development which takes access off the end of Summit Drive in Corte Madera, should occur on this property. The remaining 40 acres should be preserved as permanent open space (either on individual lots, as common area or voluntarily offered for dedication to the City or the County Open Space District).

**Program R-21-1:** The Warner Ridge property should be zoned RSP-10A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per ten acres.)

- **Werber Property** (Assessor parcels: 29-320-21, 22)

This 3.05 acre parcel is located on Northridge in the middle of the “Warner Ridge” property. Access, utilities, visibility are all considered to be constraints to the development of this property.

**Policy R-22:** The Werber property is appropriate for one estate sized single-family homesite with access preferably from the lower (not ridgetop) fire road. Through the review process, the precise siting, mass, materials and color of the home should be selected to minimize off-site visual impacts and intrusion on the ridgetop fire road.

**Program R-22-1:** The Werber property should be zoned RSP-10A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per ten acres.)

- **Johnson, et al, Properties** (Assessor Parcels: 29-320-07,09,10,12,13,14,15,16; 29-331-06, 34)

These ten assessor’s parcels appear to have been created by illegal subdivisions over twenty years ago prior to the time the property was annexed to the City. They are located on the hillside above Sheridan Court and include a total of 4.16 acres. The area is generally steep and heavily wooded. The parcel is surrounded by single-family homes and the vacant Warner Ridge property which has a development potential of five homes.

**Policy R-23:** The previously subdivided Johnson, et al, properties are appropriate for a total of two single-family detached homes with access off Sheridan Court.

**Program R-23-1:** The Johnson, et al, Properties should be zoned RSP-2A (Residential, Single-Family Planned District: one home per two acres.)



- **Smaller Parcels**

In addition to the properties discussed separately above, there are also a number of smaller RP zoned Parcels. These existing legal building sites are all considered to be appropriate for only one single-family home each and they should be zoned accordingly.

### **2.3.5 Residential Buildout Potential**

Two studies were made during the update of the General Plan to determine the future residential development potential of Mill Valley. First, the large, undeveloped, residentially zoned parcels with subdivision potential (formerly zoned RP, Planned Residential) were analyzed to determine appropriate use and density. (The results of this analysis is discussed in Section, 2.3.4 Large Undeveloped Residential Properties.) A separate analysis of the potential for single-and multi-family infill residential development in existing neighborhoods was also

completed. Together, the results of these studies indicate an approximation of the total number of new residential units that could be built in Mill Valley at complete buildout. With this “buildout” estimate, projections can be made of future traffic levels, the expected number of school children, and eventual demand for public services.

As indicated on **Table 2.1**, the total neighborhood by neighborhood residential buildout potential of the City of Mill valley under this Plan was 390 additional housing units, as of January 1, 1988. The buildout projections for the infill properties are based upon the policies contained in this Plan and assume compliance with the existing City “Lot Slope” requirements and continuation of the existing development patterns and densities.

**Lot Slope Policy**

In many cases it has historically been the City’s “Lot Slope” ordinance which was more restrictive than the base zoning in determining the minimum parcel size. Consistent with the limitations on development potential imposed on the large, undeveloped residential parcels, it is the intent of this Plan to significantly limit the creation of new residential homesites in existing neighborhoods.

**Policy R-24:** In addition to other zoning restrictions, unless compelling reasons exist to support variance findings, any new single-family lot created as a part of a subdivision shall be of not lesser area and minimum width with respect to topography than as follows:

<u>Percent Lot Slope</u>	<u>Minimum Land Area in Square Feet</u>	<u>Minimum Width in Feet</u>
0-10	7,500 sq. ft.	75
11-15	10,000 sq. ft.	80
16-20	15,000 sq. ft.	100
21-30	20,000 sq. ft.	150
31-40	43,560/1 acre	200
41-50	2 acres	300
51-60	4 acres	300
61-70	6 acres	300
71-80	8 acres	300
over 80	10 acres	300

Minimum width is defined as the distance between the side lot lines, measured either (1) at a point midway between front and rear lot line; or, (2) on a line parallel to the direction of the natural contours, passing through the center of an area which would permit the location of a dwelling with the least amount of grading, the safest and most convenient driveway access, and which would otherwise conform to all provisions of the zoning ordinance. Lot slope is measured along a line passing through the center of the lot or the building site between lot lines and perpendicular to the natural contours.

This Lot Slope Policy does not apply where the proposed subdivision merely results in realignment of existing lot lines and does not create any additional parcels or building sites. In addition, this policy is not intended to cause a merger of contiguous parcels or units or land.

**Program R-24-1:** The City shall continue to utilize the City Lot Slope Ordinance in the review of subdivision applications.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, during the life of the Plan.

**Table 2.1**  
**RESIDENTIAL BUILDOUT POTENTIAL**  
**By Neighborhood**

Neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	total
<hr/>									
<u>New Single-Family Infill on RS Zoned Lots:</u>									
Developable	32	44	12	1	0	20	3	1	113
Constrained	11	43	4	0	0	5	0	0	63
<hr/>									
Subtotal:	43	87	16	1	0	25	3	1	176
% of total:	24%	49%	9%	1%	0	14%	2%	1%	100%
<u>New Units on RSP/RMP (formerly RP) Zoned Parcels:</u>									
Single-family	2	7	0	14	26	30	0	0	79
Multi-family	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
<hr/>									
Subtotal:	2	7	0	20	26	30	0	0	85
% of total:	2%	8%	0	24%	31%	35%	0	0	100%
<u>New BMR Units:</u>									
Low income developmentally disabled project				10					10
Low/moderate income family rental project on school site(s):									
		- location to be determined -							30
<u>New Second Units:</u>	10	10	5	5	5	7	8	0	50
<u>New Lots from Subdivision of RS Zoned Properties:</u>									
	4	4	1	0	0	3	0	0	12
<u>Net New Multi-Family Infill Units on RM Zoned Parcels:</u>									
	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	14	27
<hr/>									
Total:	59	108	35	36	31	65	11	15	390
% of Total:	15%	28%	9%	9%	8%	16%	3%	4%	92%
			(Plus 8% in BMR project)						100%
Neighborhoods:	1 -	Blithedale Canyon							
	2 -	Cascade Canyon							
	3 -	Miller Avenue/Molino							
	4 -	Enchanted Knolls/Eucalyptus Knolls/Bayfront							
	5 -	Scott Valley/Alto Bowl							
	6 -	Warner Canyon/Kite Hill							
	7 -	Sycamore/Tamalpais Park/Central Triangle							
	8 -	Downtown							



## 2.4 COMMERCIAL AREAS

### 2.4.1 Existing Conditions and Projections

#### Mill Valley/Tamalpais Area Planning Factors

Five primary commercial areas, with a total of approximately 1.3 million square feet of commercial and office space, are located within the two planning areas: Town Center/Lytton Square, Lower Miller Avenue, East Blithedale/Alto Center, Redwood Highway Frontage Road and Tam Junction in the unincorporated Tamalpais Planning Area. These commercial areas are made up of numerous local-serving small businesses that generally provide goods and services oriented to serve the daily shopping, service and entertainment needs of the area's residents. They are considered a valuable asset by the community and play a key role in shaping the small town character and quality of life of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area. Because these areas are generally surrounded by residential neighborhoods, nearby residents have convenient walking access to shopping opportunities. This adds to a relaxed atmosphere and creates a "community feeling." **Figure 2.3** indicates the location of these districts.

An inventory of all Mill Valley commercial establishments and their sizes was prepared as a part of this planning process. The results of this survey are shown in **Table 2.2**. The survey identified 120 commercial uses in five predominately retail categories totalling more than 580,000 square feet. In addition, there were 125 other establishments in Mill Valley providing personal and professional services, including repairs, plus other retail outlets totalling more than 632,000 square feet of space. As is noted in **Table 2.2**, the specific examples in each land use classification show that the businesses in Mill Valley are in fact primarily of a local-serving nature; very few businesses that would tend to draw from a larger market area are listed.

A similar study was made for Tam Junction which, in addition to retail space square footage, also included information on rental rates and lease terms. While the Tam Junction area currently contains over 60 businesses, due to the large amount of undeveloped and underdeveloped land in the area and a number of marginal buildings, there is an opportunity to redevelop the area and eventually provide space for a greater number of businesses. Some of the existing businesses are oriented toward serving the adjacent community and include a grocery store, auto services, building materials and equipment rentals, personal services, food services and video rentals.



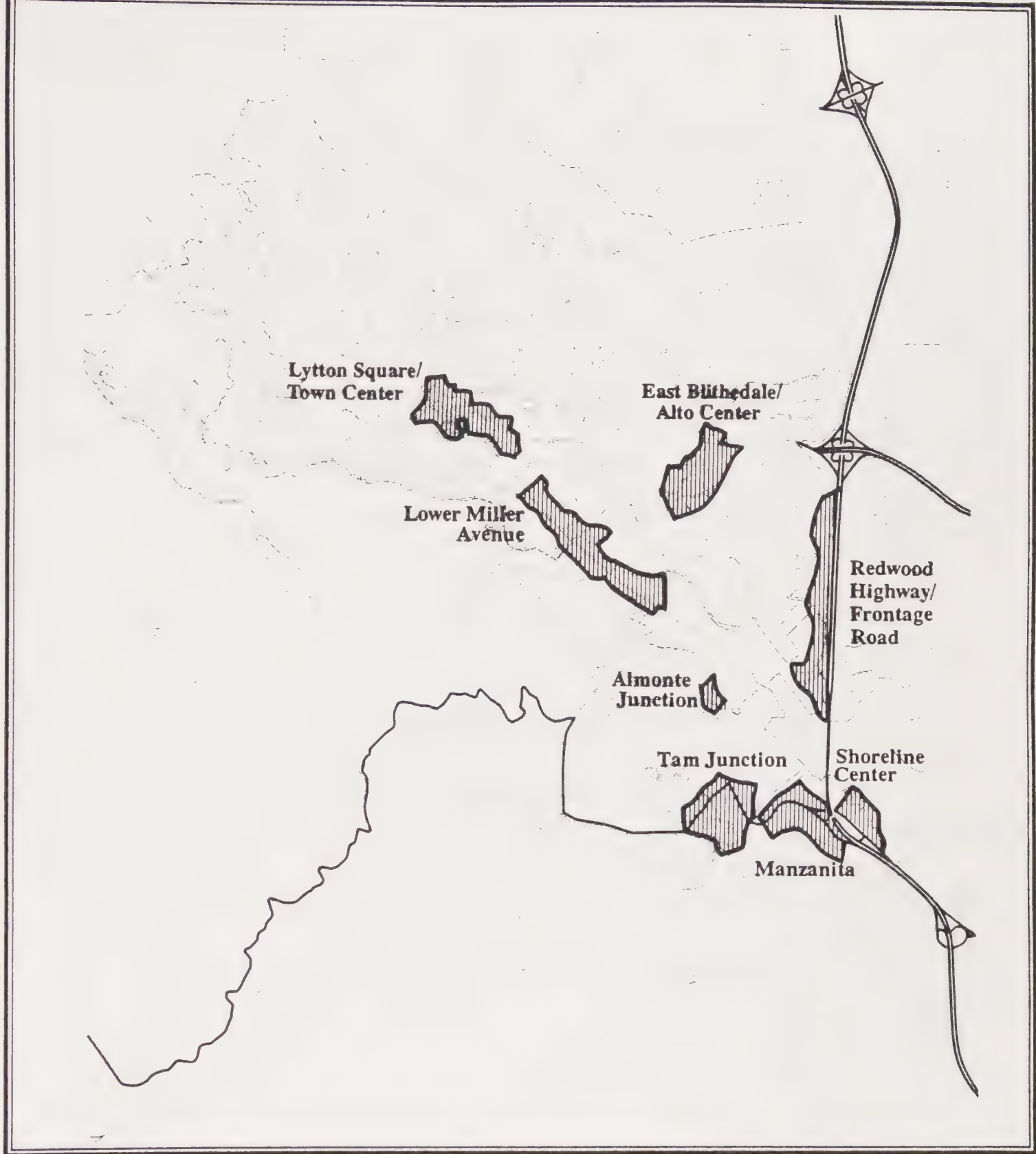
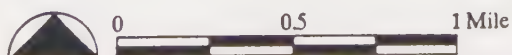


Figure 2.3

## Commercial Areas

### Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates







**Table 2.2**  
**RETAIL/OFFICE INVENTORY SUMMARY**

Approx. Square Footage (Total for each land use classification)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Location	TOTAL	Bldg Materials Hardware Garden Supply	Gen Merch Apparel/Access Furniture	Food Drug Liquor	Automotive Gasoline	Eating Drinking	Finance Insurance Real Estate	Professional Personal Service	Misc
Lytton Square/ Town Center	358,774	12,843	128,346	24,029	7,605	33,200	48,072	93,713	10,966
Lower Miller Avenue	381,522	13,628	56,293	54,381	66,058	11,373	25,225	88,974	65,589
East Blithedale/ Alto Center	203,893	11,645	20,166	52,321	7,542	11,235	19,018	61,406	20,560
Redwood Highway Frontage Road	269,221	21,874	9,000	0	5,374	34,198	67,018	80,273	51,484
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,213,410</b>	<b>59,990</b>	<b>213,805</b>	<b>130,731</b>	<b>86,579</b>	<b>90,006</b>	<b>159,333</b>	<b>324,366</b>	<b>148,599</b>

**Examples of Each Use Classification**

Bldg Materials Hardware Garden Supply	General Merch Apparel/Access Furniture	Food Drug Liquor	Automotive Gasoline	Eating Drinking	Finance Insurance Real Estate	Professional Personal Service	Misc
Nursery Constr Storage	Card Shop Gift Shop Frame Shop Video Shop Thrift Shop Antique Shop Clothing Bookstores Floor Covering Florist Imports Toys  Office Supply Beauty Supply Pet Supply Art Supply Art Gallery  Bakery Deli/Pizza (take out)  Candy Chocolate Cheese Shop	Grocery 7 Eleven  Pharmacy	Auto Repair Auto Body Auto Parts Muffler Shop Jiffy Lube  Auto Dealer Car Rental Taxi  Service Station	Restaurant (sit down) Cafe Bar/Pub	Bank Investors Brokers  Accounting Bookkeeping  Developers	Architects Engineers Designers Lawyers Doctors Dentists Optometrists Medical/Health  Admin Office Construc Co (offices) Travel Agency  Barber Shop Beauty Shop Laundry Dry Cleaners Shoe Repair TV Repair  Pet Hospital Cat Clinic	Movie Theatre Motel  Cabinet Maker Kitchen Remodel  School of Dance Center for the Performing Arts  Convalescent Ctr  Film Production Photo/Graphics Publishing Printing  Self Storage

Several other smaller commercial areas are also located within the planning area. Typically, these areas consist of either residential dwellings that have been converted to office or retail uses, or convenience retail stores, such as a Seven-Eleven or a gas station. In addition, within the Tamalpais Planning Area, the Shoreline Master Plan area currently includes an office complex and other miscellaneous businesses and the Manzanita area is made up of several motels, restaurants and bars.

Recent commercial trends in the Planning Area have indicated increasing competition from major new shopping centers elsewhere in Marin County, as well as a greatly expanded commercial base in southern Marin County. This has affected small, local-serving businesses in the Mill Valley area by increasing the supply of establishments providing similar goods and services and thus making it more difficult for local businesses to capture a sufficient portion of their respective markets.

Furthermore, the Mill Valley area in particular is perceived by those outside of the community, as a prime market area for upscale, tourist-oriented retail businesses, similar to those found in Sausalito. While the long-standing policy of the City is to discourage these types of businesses, some have in fact located within the community. Their eagerness to locate here, along with the higher rates they are willing to pay, are having the effect of escalating rents within the commercial areas. With rising rents, existing local-serving businesses have trouble maintaining or increasing profits. In many cases, low rate, long-term leases are the primary factor in keeping these local-serving businesses operating.

Much of the aura of potential commercial success for upscale, tourist-oriented businesses in Mill Valley is unfounded. Recent tenants of this type have often not realized the commercial success predicted for them and many have been forced to close. This “revolving door” of retail establishments is emerging as a trend and has the effect of deteriorating the vitality and unique image of the area’s commercial districts.

A majority of the local-serving businesses in the area are owned and operated by small, independent proprietors. Many are local residents who have a sincere interest in the future of the town and are therefore involved in local organizations and institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the School District and local service clubs. Their activities help to build a type of community feeling and strength that contributes to the “small town character” of the Mill

Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. This environment may be threatened by interest on the part of Bay Area and national chain stores to locate in Mill Valley. Their resources are such that they will, over time, tend to force out the independent proprietor. However, the City or County government's ability to forestall this trend is limited. Therefore, an issue for this General Plan is to initiate programs that balance the concern that local-serving businesses be preserved against undue competition by chain stores, with recognition that many local businesses must draw from a market larger than Mill Valley.

### **Results of the Commercial Business Survey**

In September 1987, the City of Mill Valley, in an effort to gather data for the commerce section of this General Plan, conducted a public opinion survey in the city and the Tamalpais Planning Area. The purpose of the survey was to sample resident's opinions about the community's five existing commercial districts and obtain their suggestions for developing a stronger business climate. The survey was conducted by mail, with each postal patron receiving a questionnaire. Surveys were then returned to the City for tabulation. There was an unusually large response for a survey of this kind: of a total of 13,000 distributed, 1,503 completed questionnaires were returned (12 percent), many with opinions volunteered on a variety of subjects. A report of the detailed analysis of the survey is located in Appendix A.

The distribution of responses fairly accurately reflects the population distribution of the area. Most responses came from those living closest to Tam Junction (34 percent) and the Lytton Square/Town Center (31 percent), the areas with the highest population concentrations.

**Table 2.3**  
**Closest Shopping Area to Respondent's Area of Residence**

<b>Base:</b>	<b>All respondents</b>	<b>(1503)</b>
	Lytton Square/Town Center	31%
	E. Blithedale/Alto Center	11
	Tamalpais Junction	34
	Lower Miller Avenue	12
	Redwood Highway/Frontage	
	Road/Strawberry	11
	No Answer	1

Key findings of the statistical analysis of the survey include:

- Residents tend to shop most frequently in the area in which they live.
- Lytton Square/Town Center and Lower Miller Avenue draw the most traffic from those who do not reside nearby.
- Convenient location is chosen by three-fourths of the respondents as something they like about the Mill Valley commercial establishments.
- The ambiance of personal service, attractive surroundings, parking availability and meeting friends are also mentioned frequently.
- High prices and a narrow selection of merchandise were the most frequently cited dislikes about Mill Valley commercial establishments.
- The tourist orientation and lack of amenities, such as parking and public restrooms, were also frequent criticisms.
- Clothing stores, bed-breakfast inns, and food establishments were most often cited as needed additions to the commercial areas. Specialty stores were also mentioned.
- Although street repair is the improvement most frequently mentioned as necessary, suggested improvements included public restrooms, landscaping and public seating.
- Volunteered responses indicated that most wanted to maintain the character of the area (keep small town character, no franchise businesses, less tourist-oriented businesses) and to make improvements (keep small businesses, more parking, more shops for daily needs).



Overall, the survey indicated that quite a bit of resident's shopping is done in Mill Valley and Tam Junction, a great deal of it in the respondent's neighborhood. Residents would like some improvements made to the commercial areas, but want to retain the small town character that currently exists.

### **Mill Valley Commercial Conditions**

In addition to the trends discussed above, several other issues pertain specifically to the commercial areas within the City of Mill Valley. This section first summarizes issues of city-wide concern, then discusses conditions in each of the four commercial districts within the city.

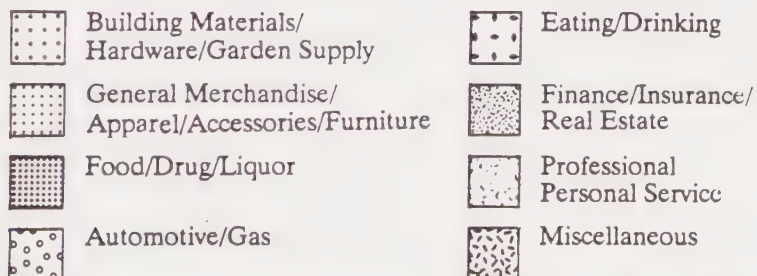
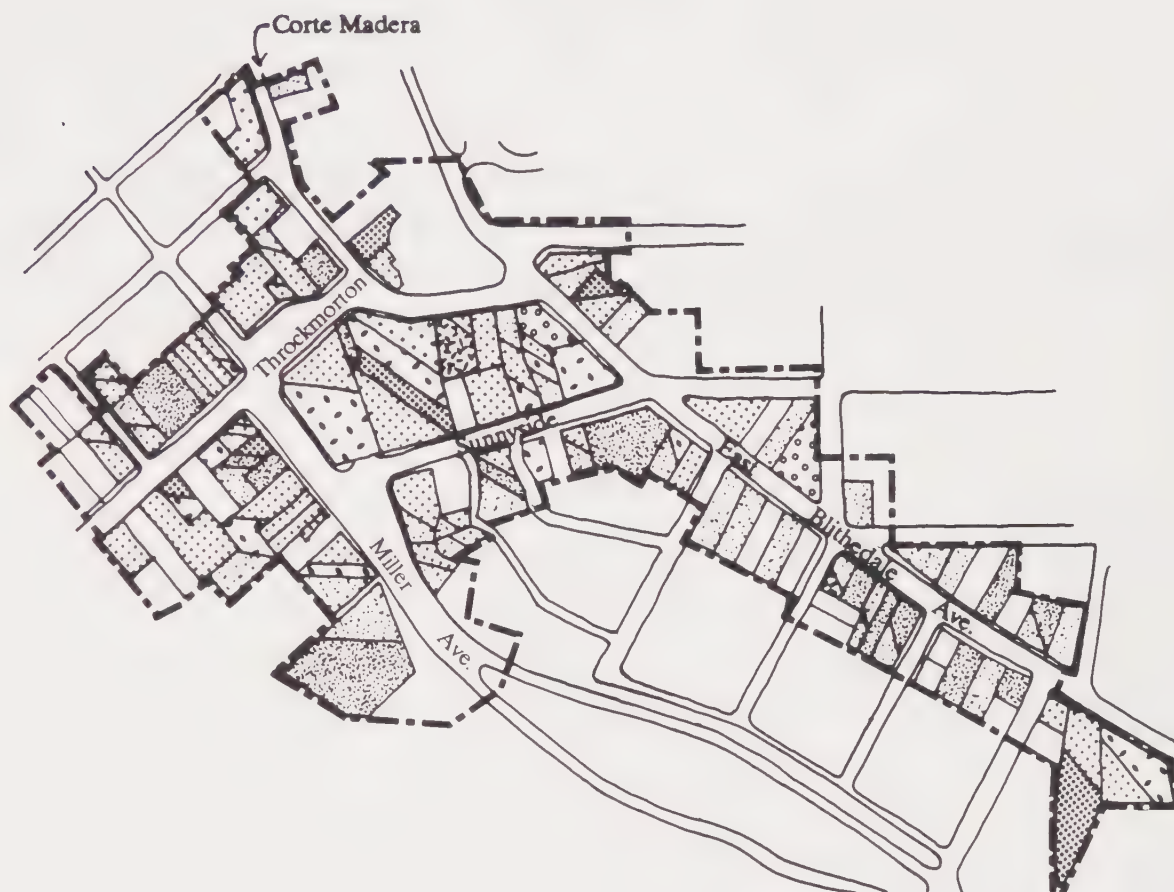
- It has been observed that there are parcels on the edge of the commercial zones that have never been proven to be successful or have been only marginally successful. This indicates that the commercial districts may have “sprawled” into areas that are inappropriate for commercial development. Plus, because the inventory of commercial space in Mill Valley has shown that the City has more commercial square footage than cities of similar size, it may be appropriate to somewhat compress the size of the commercial districts in order to reinforce their vitality. In order to reduce the size of the commercial districts, rezoning of some fringe parcels to non-commercial uses would be appropriate.
- In a similar fashion, there are certain properties within the City that are inappropriately zoned for commercial uses because they are physically detached from existing commercial uses. Operation of commercial uses in these areas negatively affects adjacent residences with noise and traffic impacts.
- While conversion of residences to office use has not occurred in the recent past, current RM (multi-family residential) zoning permits this type of use change with a Conditional Use Permit. This practice has previously resulted in the reduction of important housing stock. The trend is especially evident along East Blithedale Avenue and in the downtown and Lower Miller Avenue areas where the two commercial areas are beginning to be linked by a strip of predominantly office uses.

- The existing utility poles and overhead wires detract from the appearance of the area.
- The natural physical conditions of Mill Valley, along with the close proximity of residential neighborhoods to the commercial areas creates a situation where noise from late night commercial establishments is amplified up into the surrounding hillside residences.
- A parking survey prepared as part of the Transportation Section indicates that several of Mill Valley's public parking areas are reaching capacity. Residents have also indicated that they have experienced difficulty finding parking in most of the city's commercial areas.
- Several lumberyards and construction materials companies are currently located in Mill Valley and the Tam Area. While these businesses are not considered visually attractive, they do serve a wide market and meet an important need in the community by allowing local carpenters and owner/builders to continue to purchase supplies locally.

### **Lytton Square/Town Center**

Lytton Square is characterized by a tight configuration of one and two-story buildings which cluster around the central depot and plaza. The variety of small businesses, the compatible architectural style of the buildings and its unique natural setting gives it the quality of a small village. In addition to being the community's primary shopping district and civic and cultural center of the city, Lytton Square has become the community meeting place, where local residents not only shop and do business, but also socialize with friends and neighbors.

Most of the businesses in the Lytton Square/Town Center Area are small-scale and many are oriented to provide goods and services to meet the daily living needs of local residents. None are greater than 16,500 square feet in size and the majority of businesses lease between 2,000 and 4,000 square feet (**Figure 2.4**). Of a total of approximately 360,000 square feet in this commercial district, 35 establishments lease 128,000 square feet which are devoted to general merchandise, apparel and furniture goods and 51 businesses lease 140,000 square feet to provide professional and personal services. Of note are the 13 restaurants which may draw business from a larger area than Mill Valley.



## Existing Land Use Lytton Square/Town Center

Figure 2.4

## Mill Valley General Plan

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Lytton Square is the area hardest hit by rising rents and pressure to convert to a tourist-oriented market. There is a concern that without additional planning guidelines, existing businesses will continue to be replaced with businesses that are willing to pay increasingly higher rents, including franchise or chain stores which come to Mill Valley with greater resources than those of the many small independent proprietors that are currently located in the area.

While Lytton Square is considered a successful commercial district, additional capital improvements are necessary, or may soon be necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of the area. These improvements could include undergrounding of utilities, construction of additional parking facilities and implementation of a landscaping program.

### **Lower Miller Avenue**

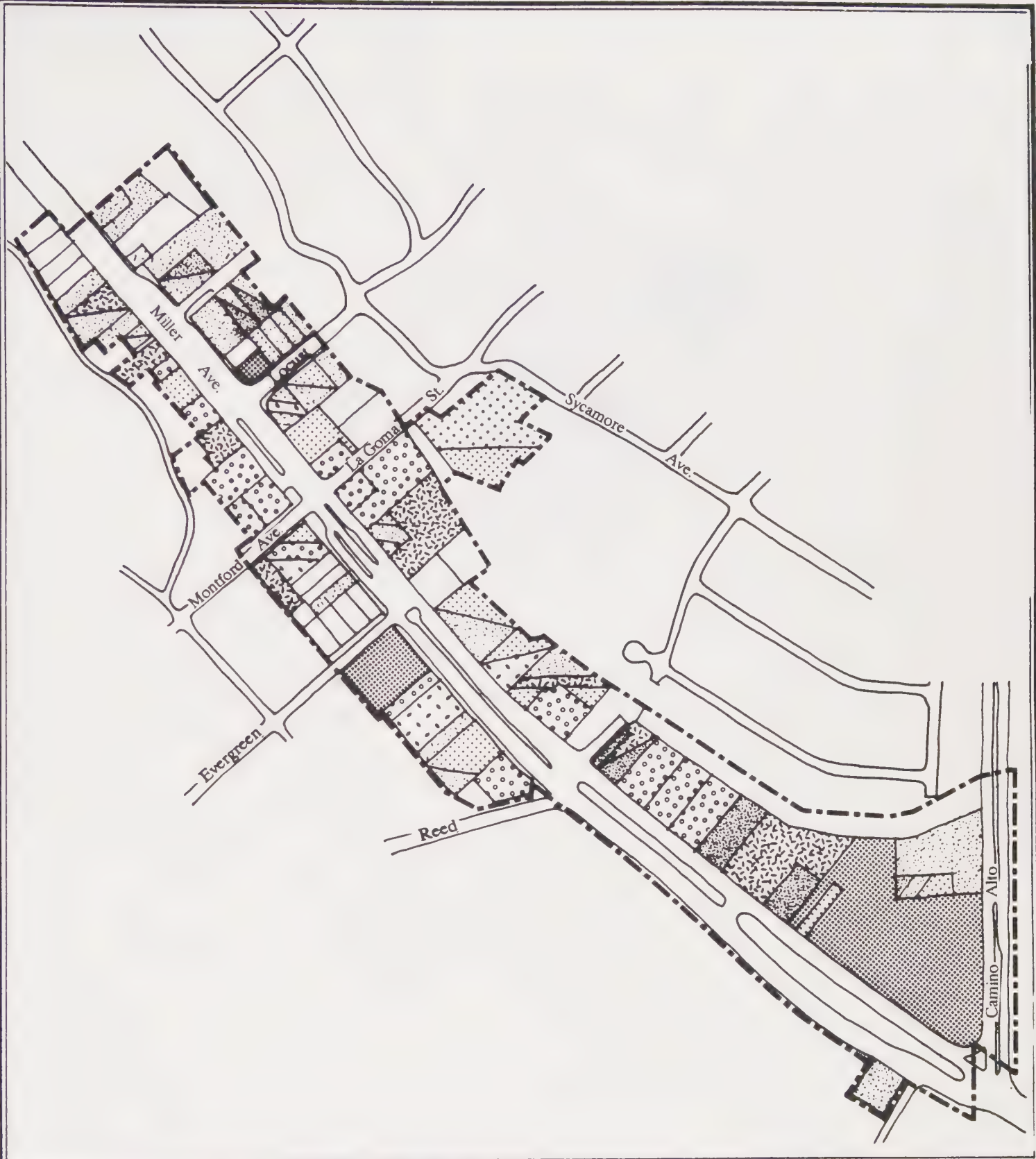
Lower Miller Avenue, from Locust Street to Camino Alto, currently functions as a neighborhood shopping area for the adjacent residential areas. It also provides office space and a series of auto parts and repair businesses which serve the entire community. **Figure 2.5** shows that a wide variety of businesses are located in this area and that while most are fairly small in size (1,000 to 5,000 square feet). The largest single building in this area is the 33,000 square foot Safeway market.





The character of Lower Miller Avenue is different from that of Lytton Square. Buildings have a range of architectural styles and massing; some have parking on the street, while others are flush with the sidewalk; and vacant or underdeveloped parcels are scattered through the area. Inadequate parking is a problem, despite recent improvements by the City. And, the extreme width of the street is not inviting to pedestrians and thus encourages short auto trips from shop to shop. These physical features of the area are limiting its commercial potential.

### **East Blithedale/Alto Center Area**

East Blithedale/Alto Center, since its development, has served as both a neighborhood shopping center for the residents of the Alto and Enchanted Knolls residential areas and a location for larger-scale businesses which serve a community-wide or regional market. The Mill Valley Post Office is also located at Alto Center. Currently, the East Blithedale/Alto Center area consists of a total of 204,000 square feet of leasable space (**Figure 2.6**). Its location near Highway 101 makes it attractive for regional-serving businesses, however, the clientele of these businesses also bring additional traffic to an already congested area.





-  Building Materials/  
Hardware/Garden Supply
-  General Merchandise/  
Apparel/Accessories/Furniture
-  Food/Drug/Liquor
-  Automotive/Gas

-  Eating/Drinking
-  Finance/Insurance/  
Real Estate
-  Professional  
Personal Service
-  Miscellaneous



## Existing Land Use Lower Miller Ave.

Figure 2.5





## Mill Valley General Plan





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-  Building Materials/  
Hardware/Garden Supply
-  General Merchandise/  
Apparel/Accessories/Furniture
-  Food/Drug/Liquor
-  Automotive/Gas

-  Eating/Drinking
-  Finance/Insurance/  
Real Estate
-  Professional  
Personal Service
-  Miscellaneous



## Existing Land Use Alto Center

Figure 2.6

## Mill Valley General Plan

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## **Redwood Highway Frontage Road Area**

This area has historically served as a regional-serving office and commercial area. The uses tend to be more oriented to the Highway 101 frontage road and include a large amount of professional office space and some regional freeway-oriented commercial uses (**Figure 2.7**). The area also includes several parcels and that have the potential for redevelopment sometime in the future. The long-term appearance of this area is very important as it constitutes most of Mill Valley's frontage on Highway 101, and has historically suffered from having a considerable amount of substandard development.

## **Tamalpais Planning Area**

During the process of updating the Tamalpais Area Community Plan, detailed studies of development potential were made for Tam Junction, the Manzanita area and Shoreline Center. These studies indicated that while Tam Junction primarily serves as a local-serving commercial area, Manzanita, with its motels and restaurants, and the Shoreline Center, with office development, tend to serve a broader, sub-regional market. These unincorporated areas are particularly important to residents of Mill Valley because they lie along one of the primary entrance corridors to the City.

Other smaller commercial areas in the Tamalpais Planning Area include Almonte Junction, Poplar Plaza and the Montford Area. These areas are located within residential neighborhoods and provide convenience goods and services

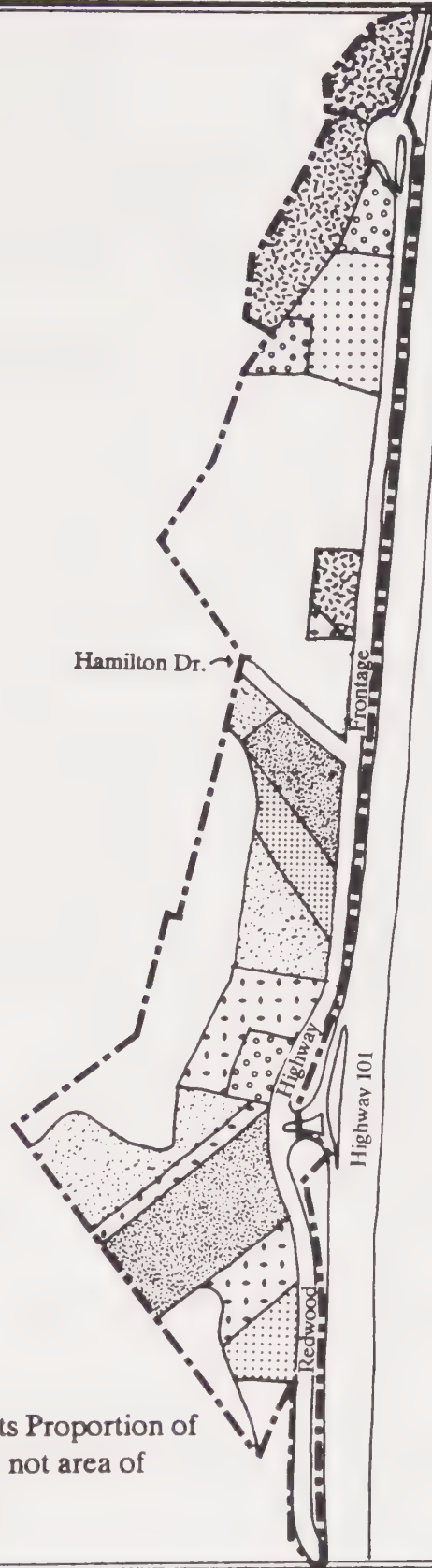
### **2.4.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

#### **Intent**









Mill Valley's commercial areas currently provide convenience shopping close to home in a convenient, safe and attractive environment which compliments the residential character of the town and strengthens a sense of community which is one of Mill Valley's greatest assets. It is the intent of these policies to protect and promote this role by encouraging small-scale, independent retail and service providers which tend to serve the full range of regular needs of nearby neighborhoods, as well as the greater Mill Valley area, through a relatively low intensity,







Note: Map represents Proportion of land uses per parcel, not area of land use.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Building Materials/<br>Hardware/Garden Supply         |  Eating/Drinking                   |
|  General Merchandise/<br>Apparel/Accessories/Furniture |  Finance/Insurance/<br>Real Estate |
|  Food/Drug/Liquor                                      |  Professional<br>Personal Service  |
|  Automotive/Gas  |  Miscellaneous                     |

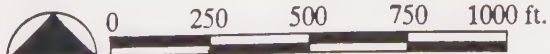


Figure 2.7

# Redwood Highway Mill Valley General Plan

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Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates



primarily daytime, pedestrian oriented, multiple stop shopping mix of uses. It is also the intent of these policies to recognize and enhance the distinct characteristics and different market orientations of each of the separate commercial areas of Mill Valley as follows:

Town Center/Lytton Square Area should continue to serve as a neighborhood and community shopping area for the western portion of the community as well as the town's civic and cultural center. Special care will have to be taken in the area to prevent primarily visitor serving uses from replacing those which serve the day-to-day needs of local residents.

Lower Miller Avenue (from Locust to Camino Alto) should serve as both a neighborhood shopping area for the adjacent residential neighborhoods as well as a location for office and community-wide service uses such as auto repair/parts uses. However, in this area, care should be taken to maintain a diverse mix of community serving uses and ensure that new service or office uses force out those uses which serve the day-to-day needs of the local residents.

East Blithedale/Alto Center Area should function both as a neighborhood oriented shopping area for the adjacent residential neighborhoods as well as an area that provides space for uses which meet the commercial needs of other community residents. Intensive commercial uses or those which are more regional serving in nature should be discouraged.

Redwood Highway Frontage Road Area should continue to serve as a regional serving office and commercial area. Any new development or redevelopment in this area should reinforce this existing pattern of uses while creating an attractive frontage for the community. High quality site planning, architecture and landscaping should be required in all new developments.

It is also the City's intent to provide a diversity of retail, office and economic opportunities in the City.

**Policy C-1: The City shall preserve and enhance the community and neighborhood serving aspects of each of the four commercial areas of the City (Town Center/Lytton Square, Lower Miller Avenue, East Blithedale/Alto Center and Redwood Highway Frontage Road) while maintaining and improving the diversity and mix of commercial opportunities in Mill Valley.**

**Program C-1-1:** Recognizing the potential problems, the City will analyze the existing parking requirements and zoning restrictions to determine their impacts in encouraging or discouraging the preferred commercial uses.

**Time Frame:** Six to twelve months after Plan approval.

**Program C-1-2:** Based upon the analysis completed in program C-1-1 above, the City will establish special zoning regulations for each of the four commercial areas.

**Time Frame:** Twelve to eighteen months after Plan approval.

**Program C-1-3:** Recognizing the potential problems, the City will study the appropriateness of developing and implementing anti-proliferation policies and ordinances to maintain the preferred mix of commercial uses.

**Time Frame:** Twelve to eighteen months after Plan approval.

**Program C-1-4:** The City will consider amending the Municipal Code to require use permits for the division of existing large commercial spaces into smaller spaces for multiple tenants.

**Time Frame:** As soon as possible, but not later than eighteen months after Plan approval.

**Program C-1-5:** The City will consider amending the Municipal Code to reflect the Housing Element policy of discouraging the conversion of existing residential units to commercial or office space.

**Time Frame:** As soon as possible but not later than eighteen months after Plan approval.

**Program C-1-6:** The City will work cooperatively with local businesses to help them remain in the Mill Valley Community and accommodate reasonable growth of the businesses.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.



**Policy C-2: The Town Center/Lytton Square area should continue to serve as the primary commercial and civic center for the community and the City will develop a plan for public improvements in the area and design guidelines for the review of all development proposals.**

**Program C-2-1:** The City will prepare a prioritized list of capital improvement projects, including urban design, landscaping, utility undergrounding, stream restoration, parking and circulation improvements, and will identify funding opportunities and will develop an implementation schedule for the Town Center/Lytton Square area. The City will also consider the creation of a special assessment district as a means to implement special improvement projects.

**Time Frame:** Twelve to twenty-four months after Plan approval.

**Program C-2-2:** The City will implement the capital improvement projects on a prioritized basis.

**Time Frame:** Dependent upon funding availability.

**Program C-2-3:** The City will utilize the following site planning, building design and landscape guidelines during the required Design Review for all new commercial buildings and all additions or alterations to commercial buildings and the design of public improvements in the Town Center/Lytton Square area:

Guideline 1: PRESERVATION OF VIEWS - Views of Mt. Tamalpais as one enters the Town Center/Lytton Square area and views of the hills and trees which form the backdrop for this commercial area should be protected. Development should comply with the following criteria:

- a) The major groupings of trees which form the backdrop to the downtown should be preserved. However, the selective trimming of trees to enhance vistas is acceptable.

- b) Building heights and roof shapes along Miller Avenue, Throckmorton, Lovell and Bayview should not interrupt the hill backdrop.
- c) Trees placed in the Plaza or along the adjoining streets should still allow views of the backdrop.
- d) Utility poles and overhead wires should be undergrounded.

Guideline 2: CONTRAST BETWEEN NATURAL & MAN-MADE ELEMENTS - The contrast which presently exists between the natural surroundings and man-made elements of the town center should be preserved and enhanced. Public improvements to the Plaza and street spaces should utilize formal, geometric forms and ordered arrangements and avoid use of materials and designs which have a strong natural or rustic connotation, such as meandering or curvilinear forms, rough stone work, etc.

Guideline 3: MAINTAINING THE SENSE OF ENCLOSURE - In order to maintain and reinforce the sense of enclosure which exists in Lytton Square and adjoining streets, the following criteria should be complied with:

- a) The Plaza and the depot building should continue to be a focal point for the Town Center/Lytton Square area.
- b) One story structures should not be allowed along Throckmorton between Madrona and Corte Madera Avenue or along the west side of Miller Avenue from Miller Lane to Throckmorton. Along these frontages, building heights should not exceed two stories above the street level. Roof shapes should be designed to minimize the impact on views of the hill backdrop.
- c) Building facades, rather than plant materials, should provide the immediate foreground on Lytton Square and Throckmorton.
- d) A continuous building facade should be maintained along the west side of Miller Avenue and along Throckmorton from Madrona to Blithedale Avenue.

- e) Red tile or fire treated wood shake roofs should continue to be utilized to accentuate building facades.

Guideline 4: ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN - New or remodeled buildings should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Older or distinguished structures should be renovated to respect the original design. If remodeling is proposed, it should be of the entire structure so that the building remains integrated and is not broken into chaotic parts by signing or placement of an incongruous facade on a portion of the structure.
- b) New construction or remodeling of undistinguished structures should be of a high quality architectural design. Effective reinterpretations of the local architectural heritage (what has come to be called Bay Region style) should be encouraged, but not required.
- c) Roofs of structures should be confined to simple forms such as hipped, mansard, low pitched or flat roofs. Horizontal rather than vertical roof lines should be utilized to prevent a jagged, discordant facade line which competes with, rather than complements, the natural backdrop. Where other than flat roofs are used, they should be designed to minimize obstruction of view of the hill backdrop.
- d) Fixtures, art objects or historic architectural details should not be affixed to structures or sited in public spaces or spaces viewed from public areas, unless such objects are compatible with the building design.

Guideline 5: EXTERIOR BUILDING MATERIALS - Primary building materials should be wood, brick, stone, or stucco. The prominent use of glossy or shiny finishes such as porcelain enamel panels or metallic surfaces should be avoided. Above the ground floor, glass surfaces should be subordinated to solid wall surfaces.

Guideline 6: BUILDING COLORS - Building colors should be consistent with the following criteria:

- a) Buildings should convey a monochromatic impression highlighted by limited use of bright, intense, warm and cool colors for accessories, such as signs and awnings.
- b) Building colors should generally be muted earth tones, derived from either painted surfaces or natural materials such as brick, wood or concrete with fine exposed aggregate.
- c) Building colors should avoid dark tones so as to provide a contrast with the natural backdrop.
- d) Large surfaces of intense white should be avoided.
- e) Building colors should tend toward cool, rather than warm, tones.
- f) Building trim and ornamentation should be painted the same color, but in a lighter or darker tone than the building, to emphasize these scale-giving elements.

Guideline 7: SIGNS - Commercial signage should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Letters and other symbols should be dimensioned and located to be read primarily by the pedestrian.
- b) Blinking, flashing moving or bare tube neon signs should be prohibited.
- c) Free-standing signs higher than four and a half feet should not be permitted.
- d) Internally-lit plastic signs should be prohibited.
- e) All commercial signs should be restricted to the ground floor level.



- f) All signs should be designed and located to relate to the design of the entire structure to which applied. The building rather than the individual business establishment should be the basic design unit.
- g) To reinforce the character of the Town Center/Lytton Square area, the use of serif letters such as Times Roman, Clarendon and Century Schoolbook should be encouraged. Overly ornate letter styles, such Old English, should be avoided.
- h) Signs projecting into the public right-of-way should not be permitted, with the following exceptions: Signs projecting no more than three and a half feet and containing a total surface area on one side no greater than five square feet should be allowed if examples of excellent graphic art. Signs should be permitted on the front edge or end panels of awnings. Signs may be fastened or suspended from awnings if perpendicular to the building facade and if they have dimensions not exceeding eight inches in height and 42 inches in length. In all cases, a clearance from sidewalk elevation of seven and one half feet must be maintained.
- i) Any of the following color and material combinations of messages and background are acceptable: (1) background of intense colors, either warm or cool, with painted, applied or engraved letters or symbols in white, black, gold or bronze; (2) background of natural materials or painted surfaces in earth tones with applied letters or symbols in white, black, gold or bronze; (3) background of natural materials with engraved letters or symbols in intense colors, white, black, gold or bronze; (4) gold leaf letters or symbols applied to window surfaces.
- j) Applied letters, rather than painted letters, should be used where the message is placed directly on the primary building surface.
- k) Where sign illumination is provided, it should be indirect.

Guideline 8: LIGHTING - Lighting in this area should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Placement and intensity of lighting should preserve night views of the hill backdrop as one approaches the Town Center/Lytton Square area along Miller Avenue.
- b) Light should be a warm, rather than cool, color.
- c) To protect views of Mt. Tamalpais and the hill backdrop and to achieve a pedestrian-scaled setting, tall pole mounted light fixtures should not be used in the Town Center/Lytton Square area.
- d) Lighting should be supplied in any of the following ways: (1) tree-mounted fixtures; (2) wall or roof-mounted fixtures; (3) low shielded fixtures; (4) floodlighting of buildings, tress, or other objects; (5) pedestrian-scale pole mounted light fixtures, approximately ten to 12 feet in height; or (6) interior display lighting.
- e) New street lights should be of a simple consistent design to provide a sense of unity in Downtown.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy C-3: In order for the Town Center to function as a convenient, resident serving commercial area, adequate parking must continue to be available.**

**Program C-3-1:** The City will closely monitor the parking situation in the Town Center/Lytton Square area and; if the need arises, funding is available and potential sites are identified; will provide additional public parking spaces.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program C-3-2:** The City will require new development to provide the number of parking spaces required by the municipal code or pay the current in-lieu parking fee so that the City can create new public parking spaces.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy C-4: Commercial uses should be confined to the main commercial streets and should not be allowed to expand onto primarily residential streets.**

**Program C-4-1:** The following parcels in the downtown area that are currently zoned commercial are inappropriate for commercial use and should be rezoned to the “Higher Density Multi-Family” zoning designation:

9 Creek Lane (28-061-21)  
55 Lovell Avenue (29-055-29, 30)  
162 Throckmorton Avenue (28-055-02)  
170 Throckmorton Avenue (28-055-03)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption

**Program C-4-2:** The following parcels in the downtown area that are currently zoned commercial are inappropriate for commercial use and should be rezoned to the “Lower Density Multi-Family” zoning designation:

44-62 Miller Avenue (28-280-02, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.

**Program C-4-3:** The following parcels in the downtown area that are currently zoned CN-Neighborhood Commercial, or PA-Professional Administrative, are inappropriate for commercial or office use and should be rezoned single-family residential:

49 Hill Street (28-021-03)  
7 Mountain View (28-023-11)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.

**Policy C-5: The Lower Miller Avenue area, from Camino Alto to Willow, should continue to serve as an office and community and neighborhood serving commercial and service area and the City will develop programs and design guidelines to enhance the community serving aspects of the area.**

**Program C-5-1:** The City will develop a plan, with implementation strategies, that will enhance the community serving aspects of this commercial area. The plan should particularly be coordinated with any proposals to develop or redevelop the parcels located near the intersection of Miller and Evergreen. Special emphasis should be placed on improving pedestrian circulation, increasing parking and concentrating the commercial uses in a cohesive area.

**Time Frame:** Two to five years after approval of the Plan, or sooner if necessary to coordinate with development plans for the Miller/Evergreen area.

**Program C-5-2:** The City should give further consideration to the installation of a traffic signal at the corner of Miller and Montford/LaGoma as a way to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the Miller Avenue right-of-way.

**Time Frame:** Within two years after approval of the Plan.

**Program C-5-3:** The City will continue to permit office and community and regional serving automobile related service commercial uses in appropriate locations within the Miller Avenue commercial area, but will discourage any expansion of these uses if other community serving uses, such as food services, cleaning establishments, clothing stores or barber shops are forced out of this commercial area because of this expansion or if the service uses will have adverse impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as applications for new uses or changes in uses in this area are being reviewed.

**Program C-5-4:** The City will utilize the following site planning, building design and landscape guidelines during the required Design Review for all new commercial buildings and all additions or alterations to commercial buildings and the design of public improvements in the Lower Miller Avenue commercial area:

Guideline 1: PRESERVATION OF VIEWS - Views of adjoining hills and the terminal



view of Mt. Tamalpais should be preserved. In order to accomplish this, improvements should comply with the following:

- a) Where median planting occurs, it should not exceed three feet in height when full grown. However, single trees or small groupings of trees might be placed in the median area if spaced to preserve the hill views and expansiveness of the street.
- b) Trees planted at curbside should not exceed 30 feet when full grown. Greater heights are possible for trees planted farther from the curb.
- c) In order that buildings do not obscure or destroy the visual relationship between street space and hill backdrop, building heights should not exceed two stories in height.
- d) When viewed from the roadway, commercial signs should not obscure views of the hills and adjacent forested areas.

Guideline 2: REINFORCING THE DIRECTIONAL QUALITY OF MILLER - In order to maintain and reinforce the directional quality of Miller Avenue and its focus on Mt. Tamalpais, the following criteria is suggested:

- a) Provide street trees along the curb line in a nearly continuous, rhythmic pattern. (Note previous restrictions on tree heights.)
- b) Minimize curb cuts to preserve the continuity of the roadway and on-street parking. (For example, curb cuts should not exceed 14 feet in width and a spacing of 20 feet should be provided between curb cuts when provided on the same ownership parcel. Curb cuts should be limited to one curb cut for every 50 feet of street frontage.)
- c) Avoid abrupt changes in the road alignment except at the La Goma/Montford intersection where the directional pattern should be broken to help emphasize this major traffic crossing and the related concentration of business activities.

Guideline 3: SITE DEVELOPMENT - Site development should strive to achieve loosely organized clusters of buildings unified by courtyards and landscape areas or parking lots. The Miller Avenue frontage should provide the automotive access, with actual building activities focusing inward or toward Corte Madera Creek. The latter is intended to help implement a program of renewal of the stream area. The main intent should be to knit together existing and future buildings which may vary substantially in scale.

Guideline 4: ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN - Buildings should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Older or distinguished structures should be renovated to respect the original design. If remodeling is proposed, it should be of the entire structure so that the building remains integrated and is not broken into chaotic parts by signing or placement of an incongruous facade on a portion of the structure.
- b) New buildings or remodeled buildings with undistinguished character should be of high quality architectural design and quaint or nostalgic architecture should be avoided.
- c) Roofs of structures should be confined to simple forms such as hipped, mansard, low pitched or flat roofs. Horizontal rather than vertical forms should be emphasized to achieve the directional quality sought along Miller Avenue and to prevent a jagged, discordant facade line which competes with, rather than complements, the natural backdrop. Where other than flat roofs are used, they should be designed to minimize obstruction of view of the hill backdrop.

Guideline 5: BUILDING MATERIALS - Primary building surfaces should generally be natural wood, brick, concrete with fine exposed aggregate or sand blasted finish, or stucco and the prominent use of glossy or shiny finishes, such as steel, aluminum, porcelain enamel panels or metallic finishes should be avoided.

Guideline 6: BUILDING COLORS - Building colors should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Buildings should convey a monochromatic impression highlighted by limited use of bright, intense, warm and cool colors for accessories, such as signs and awnings.

- b) Building colors should generally be muted earth tones, derived from either painted surfaces or natural materials such as brick, wood or concrete with fine exposed aggregate.
- c) Building colors should avoid dark tones so as to provide a contrast with the natural backdrop.
- d) Large surfaces of intense white should be avoided.
- e) Building colors should tend toward cool, rather than warm, tones.

Guideline 7: SIGNS - Commercial signage should comply with following criteria:

- a) Letters and other symbols may be located on any vertical surface of a building if designed as an integral part of the structure. Vertical surfaces extending above the finished ceiling level of the top story of the structure should be excluded.
- b) Internally lighted signs are appropriate, however, blinking, flashing, moving or bare tube neon signs are prohibited.
- c) Floodlighting of buildings or spotlighting of building mounted or free standing signs should be encouraged.
- d) Commercial signs should not project into the public right-of-way.
- e) The signs and size of letters and symbols used should be such that they can be easily read by an approaching motorist traveling at 20 to 25 miles per hour.
- f) Commercial signage in this section of Miller Avenue should contrast with the Town Center/Lytton Square in scale (larger), placement (freestanding signs and signs above the ground floor level allowed, and materials (plastic internally lit signs permitted). Further contrast can be created by using sans-serif letters such as Futura, Venus or News Gothic along Miller Avenue, in contrast to serif letter styles in the Town Center/Lytton Square area.

Guideline 8: LIGHTING - Lighting in the area should comply with the following criteria:

- a) The placement and intensity of lighting should preserve night views of the hill backdrop as one approaches the Town Center/Lytton Square along Miller Avenue.
- b) Lighting should be warm, rather than cool, in color.
- c) The contrast between the roadway and the adjoining street spaces should be reduced by encouraging soft floodlighting of adjoining buildings and landscaping and use of interior display lighting.
- d) The height of pole mounted light fixtures should not conflict with views of Mt. Tamalpais and surrounding hill and forest areas and should not overpower the adjoining buildings. To achieve this, varying types of lighting are needed.
- e) The intensity of lighting should be reduced slightly as one leaves this segment of Miller Avenue and enters into the upper portion of the Avenue. In turn, intensity should be increased as one enters the Town Center/Lytton Square.

Guideline 9: STREET TREES - The street trees along Miller Avenue should help define the basic form of the street space. The motorist's view, however, should penetrate through and readily recognize adjoining land uses. Identification of individual businesses could be enhanced by signing which identifies major business groupings.

Guideline 10: LANDSCAPING - Landscape materials should not attempt to reproduce in the street spaces the forested character of adjoining areas. Efforts to imitate the natural setting will reduce the visual distinction between these areas. The following criteria is recommended:

- a) Avoid the use of redwoods or other evergreens in the street space.
- b) Street trees should be deciduous and should be planted in a regular pattern.



- c) The selection of street trees should be limited to two or three species to maintain uniformity.
- d) Plant materials used as ground cover and intended to be seen primarily by motorists, should be massed at a scale appropriate for the travel speed of the street.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy C-6: Commercial uses should not be allowed to expand onto the residential side streets.**

**Program C-7-1:** The following parcels that are currently zoned commercial are inappropriate for commercial use and should be rezoned to the “Lower Density Multi-Family” zoning designation:

10 Evergreen Avenue (30-07206)  
12 Evergreen Avenue (30-072-07)  
14 Evergreen Avenue (30-072-11)  
16 Evergreen Avenue (30-072-10)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.

**Policy C-7: The East Blithedale/Alto Center area should continue to serve as a major community and neighborhood serving commercial center and, as opportunities arise, the area should be visually and physically integrated to create an attractive commercial area.**

**Program C-7-1:** If and when proposals are submitted to the City for new uses or the development or redevelopment of parcels within the East Blithedale/Alto Center area, they should be reviewed for conformance with the City’s objective to support and enhance the community and neighborhood serving character of the area.

**Time Frame:** As development or redevelopment is proposed.

**Program C-7-2:** The design of the intersection of Camino Alto and East Blithedale should continue to direct major Downtown-bound traffic to Miller Avenue via Camino Alto. Traffic sign and the roadway design should clearly emphasize the East Blithedale to Camino Alto alignment, rather than the extension of Blithedale west of Camino Alto, as the major route to the Town Center/Lytton Square area.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program C-7-3:** The City will utilize the following site planning, building design and landscape guidelines during the required Design Review for all new commercial buildings and all additions or alterations to commercial buildings in the East Blithedale/Alto Center area:

Guideline 1: PRESERVING VIEWS - Buildings along East Blithedale should be set back to preserve views of the hill backdrop and landscape plans should also be reviewed as to their impact on views.

Guideline 2: SCREENING OF PARKING AREAS - Where feasible, parking should be located under the building or at a lower grade than the structures and East Blithedale in order to screen the cars and the parking lot from view.

Guideline 3: INTEGRATION BETWEEN BUILDINGS - Even though incrementally developed on separate parcels, where the opportunity arises as new buildings are built or existing buildings are remodeled, efforts should be made to visually and physically integrate buildings, out door spaces and vehicle and pedestrian circulation. Special attention should be given to integrating the property located at 759 East Blithedale with the rest of the Alto Shopping Center.

Guideline 4: BUILDING HEIGHTS - Buildings within this area should be limited to two stories.

Guideline 5: BUILDING MATERIALS, COLORS & FORMS - New or remodeled buildings should be designed to create a harmonious relationship among the individual structures forming larger groups. To accomplish this, the following measures should be taken:

- a) A consistent set of materials, colors, and building forms should be utilized.
- b) Roofs of structures should be confined to simple forms such as low pitched, hipped, or mansard. Because of the high visibility of the roof surfaces from surrounding hillside residential properties, it is especially important that design of roofs and the screening of the mechanical equipment be given special attention.

Guideline 6: LANDSCAPING - Landscaping should comply with the following criteria:

- a) In order to relate to the Enchanted Knolls side of the road, trees planted along the shopping center side of East Blithedale, from Ashford to Lomita, should be deciduous and should be planted in a random but generally continuous fashion.
- b) Where feasible, parking lots and parked cars should be screened from view by berms and/or landscaping.

Guideline 7: SIGNS - Commercial signage should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Letters and other symbols may be located on any vertical surface of a building if designed as an integral part of the structure. Vertical surfaces extending above the finished ceiling level of the top story of the structure should be excluded.
- b) Blinking, flashing, moving or bare tube neon signs are prohibited.
- c) Internally lighted signs may be appropriate in certain locations particularly west of Lomita Drive but special care should be taken to ensure that the illumination does not adversely affect hillside residential areas.
- d) As an alternative to internally illuminated signs, “halo” type or spotlighted building mounted or free standing signs should be encouraged.
- e) Commercial signs should not project into the public right-of-way.

- f) The signs and size of letters and symbols used on signs oriented toward East Blithedale should be such that they can be easily read by an approaching motorist traveling at 20 to 25 miles per hours.
- g) Commercial signage in this area should contrast with the Town Center/Lytton Square in scale (larger), placement (freestanding signs and signs above the ground floor level allowed), and materials (plastic internally illuminated signs permitted in some locations). Further contrast can be created by using sans-serif letters such as Futura, Venus or News Gothic in contrast to serif letter styles in the Town Center/Lytton Square area.

Guideline 8: LIGHTING - Building and parking lot lighting along East Blithedale should be a warm, rather than cool color. Parking lot lighting should be kept at a low level of illumination.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy C-8: New commercial uses should be confined to the existing commercial areas and should not be allowed to encroach beyond their existing boundaries.**

**Program C-8-1:** The following parcels currently zoned commercial are either already developed with a residential use or are inappropriate for commercial redevelopment and should be rezoned to the “Lower Density Multi-Family” zoning designation:

250 Camino Alto/Disabled Housing Project (30-125-07)

290 Camino Alto/Dill & Sederberg (30-132-04)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.

**Program C-8-2:** The following currently undeveloped parcel that is now zoned for office use is inappropriate for office use and should be rezoned to the “Lower Density Multi-Family” zoning designation:

Hillside next to 619 East Blithedale/Kostic (30-021-47)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.



**Program C-8-3:** Because of its small size, proximity to East Blithedale and location adjacent to residential areas, the following parcel currently zoned multi-family residential is inappropriate for either residential or commercial use and should be rezoned to allow only redevelopment for office use.

5 Ashford Ave./Redwood Oil Co. (30-340-16)

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan adoption.

**Policy C-9:** The Redwood Highway Frontage Road commercial area should continue to function as a regional as well as a community serving office and commercial area and, as the opportunities arise, the City will work with property owners to integrate individual projects and improve the appearance of this highly visible commercial area.

**Program C-9-1:** The City will develop an overall plan, with implementation strategies, to provide appropriate regional serving commercial uses including office, hotel and retail uses. The plan will provide more specific guidelines for achieving design excellence suitable for Mill Valley's primary frontage on Highway 101.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program C-9-2:** The City will utilize the following site planning, building design and landscape guidelines during the required Design Review for all new commercial buildings and all additions or alterations to commercial buildings in the Redwood Highway Frontage Road area:

Guideline 1: **TAKING ADVANTAGE OF BAYFRONT LOCATION** - All new commercial buildings and all remodeling projects on existing projects in this area should take advantage of the bayfront location and, to the maximum extent feasible, should be oriented to the shoreline and the maximum feasible public access consistent with the project and protection of important habitat areas should be provided. This is particularly important if and when proposals are submitted to the City for redevelopment of the parcels at both the northern and southern ends of this commercial area. In addition, as the opportunities arise, a continuous public shoreline path should be developed from Hamilton Drive to the north end of the Richardson Bay Bridge.

Guideline 2: TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIGHWAY 101 FRONTAGE- All new commercial buildings and all remodeling projects should give special consideration to the architectural and landscaping appearance from Highway 101 and should reflect Mill Valley's commitment to design excellence.

Guideline 3: PRESERVING VIEWS - Buildings in this area should be located to preserve some view corridors to the water and should be set back to avoid a wall effect along the frontage road. Landscape plans should also be reviewed as to their impact on view corridors to the shoreline.

Guideline 4: SCREENING OF PARKING AREAS - Where feasible, parking should be located under the building or at a lower grade than the structures in order to screen the cars and the parking lots from view.

Guideline 5: INTEGRATION BETWEEN BUILDINGS - Even though incrementally developed on separate parcels, where the opportunity arises as new buildings are built or existing buildings are remodeled, efforts should be made to physically integrate buildings out door spaces and vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

Guideline 6: BUILDING HEIGHTS - Buildings within this area should predominately be two stories with some three story elements with three story areas allowed where they add variety and architectural interest.

Guideline 7: BUILDING MATERIALS, COLORS & FORMS - New or remodeled buildings should be designed to create a harmonious relationship among the individual structures forming larger groups. To accomplish this, the following measures should be taken:

- a) A consistent set of materials, colors, and building forms should be utilized.
- b) Roofs of structures should be confined to simple forms such as low pitched, hipped, or mansard. Because of the high visibility of the area, it is especially important that all mechanical equipment is appropriately screened.

Guideline 8: LANDSCAPING - Landscaping should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Plant material should be chosen to be appropriate for the waterfront location.
- b) Where feasible, parking lots and parked cars should be screened from view by berms and/or landscaping.

Guideline 9: SIGNS - Commercial signage should comply with the following criteria:

- a) Letters and other symbols may be located on any vertical surface of a building if designed as an integral part of the structure. Vertical surfaces extending above the finished ceiling level of the top story of the structure should be excluded.
- b) Blinking, flashing, moving or bare tube neon signs are prohibited.
- c) Internally lighted signs are appropriate in this location but special care should be taken to ensure that the illumination does not create excessive glare.
- d) As an alternative to internally illuminated signs, “halo” type or spotlighted building mounted or free standing signs are also appropriate.
- e) Commercial signs should not project into the public right-of-way.
- f) The signs and size of letters and symbols used on signs should be such that they can be easily read by an approaching motorist traveling on the frontage road.
- g) Because for the freeway orientation of this area, commercial signage should contrast with other areas scale (larger), placement (freestanding signs and signs above the ground floor level allowed), and materials (plastic internally illuminated signs).

Guideline 10: LIGHTING - Building and parking lot lighting in this area should be a warm, rather than cool color. Parking lot lighting should be kept at a low level of illumination because of the residential areas that are adjacent to and look down upon this area.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

### **2.4.3 Commercial Building Intensity and Buildout Potential**

Existing Floor Area Ratios (FAR) were calculated for each of the four commercial areas within Mill Valley in order to prepare commercial building intensity standards to meet the requirements of State law. As indicated below, the existing FAR varies considerably from one commercial district to another. Reinforcing the village center character, relatively high floor area ratios occur in the Town Center/Lytton Square area, with more moderate floor area ratios in the Lower Miller Avenue area and lower, more typical suburban, floor area ratios in the East Blithedale/Alto Center and Redwood Highway Frontage Road areas.

FAR is a measure of the total square footage of a building in relation to the size of its lot, and is one factor which describes the intensity of current development. It can be used to evaluate the compatibility of proposed buildings with the surrounding commercial area. For example, a building designed for the Town Center/Lytton Square area may not be suitable for the East Blithedale/Alto Center or the Redwood Highway Frontage Road areas because the relationship of the size of the building to the lot area is not similar in each of these areas.

To calculate FAR, the total building square footage (gross floor area) is divided by the land area. This figure does not include land dedicated for public streets. If a building occupies an entire site and is one-story in height, the FAR would be 1.0. If a two-story building occupies half of the site, the FAR would also be 1.0. Buildings which do not cover the entire site and are one-story high have FAR calculations of less than one.

FAR restrictions are currently not applied to either commercial or residential buildings within Mill Valley. There are also no building setback requirements in the commercial zoning districts. Therefore, the only current standards which regulate the size of a building on a lot are the 35 foot height limit and on-site parking requirements. Because existing floor area ratios vary considerably, even within each of the commercial areas, the FAR calculations for the commercial areas shown in **Table 2.4**, are stated as ranges.



**Table 2.4**  
**Existing Floor Area Ratios by Commercial District**

	Existing FAR Range	Typical Existing FAR Range
Lytton Square/ Town Center	0.15 to 3.0	0.30 to 1.0
Lower Miller Avenue	0.04 to 2.0	0.20 to 0.60
E. Blithedale/ Alto Center	0.01 to 0.4	0.20 to 0.40
Redwood Highway Frontage Road	0.04 to 0.6	0.20 to 0.40

It should be noted that many of the buildings in these commercial areas were built prior to current off-street parking requirements and environmental standards. As a result, most new buildings will be developed at lower levels of intensity in order to meet these current standards.

**Policy C-10:** New development should reinforce and be generally compatible with the existing varying building intensities in each of the four commercial areas while at the same time ensuring that off-street parking, traffic impact and environmental requirements are met.

**Program C-10-1:** Unless variance findings can be made, the City will utilize the following maximum FAR standards in reviewing development proposals in each of the four commercial areas. Floor area ratios less than standards may be imposed if parking requirements, environmental constraints or traffic and access conditions merit lower building intensity:

Location	Maximum FAR
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Town Center/Lytton Square:	.60
Lower Miller Avenue:	.45
East Blithedale/Alto Center:	.30
Redwood Highway Frontage Road:	.35

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as plans are reviewed during the life of the plan.

As indicated in **Table 2.5**, the estimated potential additional commercial floor area within the City at complete buildout, under the Plan policies, is only approximately 45,000 square feet. This figure represents the net new area and assumes that as properties are redeveloped, some existing building may be replaced by smaller ones which will partially offset the size of new buildings. The Plan also assumes that approximately two-thirds of the new commercial space will be located in the Redwood Highway Frontage Road area. Assuming an average of one employee per 550 square feet of floor area, and full project occupancy, the Plan EIR estimates that complete buildout would add approximately 82 additional jobs in the City.

At the same time, the Tamalpais Planning Area Plan would allow a total of approximately 145,400 square feet of additional commercial space at full buildout. 82,400 square feet of the total would be located in the Shoreline Center area and 57,900 square feet in the Tam Junction area. Using the same employee per square foot assumptions, the Plan EIR estimates that full buildout would add 264 jobs in the unincorporated portion of the planning area.

**Table 2.5**  
**Net Additional Potential**  
**Commercial Area at Buildout**

---

<u>Location</u>	<u>Net New Area (Square Feet)</u>
Town Center/ Lytton Square	6,000
Lower Miller Avenue	4,000
East Blithedale/ Alto Center	5,000
Redwood Highway Frontage Road	<u>30,000</u>
TOTAL	45,000

Location	Maximum FAR
----------	-------------

---

Town Center/Lytton Square:	.60
Lower Miller Avenue:	.45
East Blithedale/Alto Center:	.30
Redwood Highway Frontage Road:	.35

**Time Frame:** Ongoing, as plans are reviewed during the life of the plan.

As indicated in **Table 2.5**, the estimated potential additional commercial floor area within the City at complete buildout, under the Plan policies, is only approximately 45,000 square feet. This figure represents the net new area and assumes that as properties are redeveloped, some existing building may be replaced by smaller ones which will partially offset the size of new buildings. The Plan also assumes that approximately two-thirds of the new commercial space will be located in the Redwood Highway Frontage Road area. Assuming an average of one employee per 550 square feet of floor area, and full project occupancy, the Plan EIR estimates that complete buildout would add approximately 82 additional jobs in the City.

At the same time, the Tamalpais Planning Area Plan would allow a total of approximately 145,400 square feet of additional commercial space at full buildout. 82,400 square feet of the total would be located in the Shoreline Center area and 57,900 square feet in the Tam Junction area. Using the same employee per square foot assumptions, the Plan EIR estimates that full buildout would add 264 jobs in the unincorporated portion of the planning area.



**Table 2.5**  
**Net Additional Potential**  
**Commercial Area at Buildout**

---

<u>Location</u>	<u>Net New Area (Square Feet)</u>
Town Center/ Lytton Square	6,000
Lower Miller Avenue	4,000
East Blithedale/ Alto Center	5,000
Redwood Highway Frontage Road	<u>30,000</u>
TOTAL	45,000

## 2.5 RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

### 2.5.1 Existing Conditions and Projections

#### Recreation Facilities

Mill Valley currently has approximately 122 acres of public park and recreation land within its City Limits. Of this acreage, one-third can be described as suitable for “active recreation.” Another one-fifth is oriented toward passive recreation, while the remainder is made up of the playing fields associated with the City’s public schools. The City also operates the Community Recreation Center, which provides both physical and cultural programs, the Mill Valley Golf Clubhouse, which houses recreational and cultural programs, and the only municipal golf course in Marin County. **Figure 2.8** indicates the location of these parks and other recreation facilities.

The City of Mill Valley is honeycombed with historic lanes, paths, and steps [hereafter “lanes”]. The lanes lend a special ambience to the town and are heavily utilized by pedestrians. Because of the City’s miles of hillside streets, the paths are especially important shortcuts for the many hillside walkers, including children and others who cannot or do not drive. Some of the lanes are owned in fee simple by the City and some are City-owned easements. In some cases, these rights of way have been overgrown or converted to gardens or other uses by adjoining landowners, with or without City permission.

Since the adoption of the 1975 General Plan, a Master Plan (with revisions) has been prepared for Bay Front Park and a portion of it has been developed. Several acres of the 63.82 acre site remain essentially undeveloped and are devoted to passive enjoyment of the city’s waterfront. 33.32 acres of the site are open water or wetland areas.

Beyond the City Limits are vast public lands, including Mt. Tamalpais State Park, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Marin Municipal Water District watershed lands and the Point Reyes National Seashore. An extensive trails system links the City with these recreation areas (**Figure 2.9**). Nearby, Richardson Bay provides exceptionally good sailing and other water sport opportunities.

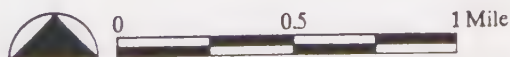
- 
1. Old Mill School
  2. Mill Valley City Hall
  3. Post Office
  4. Park School
  5. Alto-Edna MacGuire School
  6. Homestead School
  7. Mill Valley Community Rec. Center
  8. Mill Valley Public Safety Building
  9. Mill Valley Corp. Yard  
and Sewage Treatment Plant
  10. Tamalpais Union High School
  11. Caltrans Corporation Yard
  12. Tam Community Services District
  13. Tamalpais Valley Improvement Club (Privately Owned)
  14. Tamalpais Valley School
  15. Mill Valley Golf Course Clubhouse
  16. Middle School

Figure 2.8

## Public Facilities

### Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates









Trail Proposed      Trail Open to Public

Hiking Only



Riding and Hiking



Hiking and Bicycling



Figure 2.9

## Trails Plan

### Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates





Because the City's topography is very steep in many neighborhoods, the amount of flat lands that are suitable for many organized sports is sparse. In some cases, possible school closures could have the potential to impact several of the most utilized playing fields.

The City also has a system of pathways, lanes and steps that are maintained primarily by the Department of Public Works. These paths originate from the older neighborhoods and funnel into the downtown area along pedestrian lanes that are separate from roadways.

## **Cultural Facilities**

Mill Valley's publicly operated cultural facilities presently consist of the Mill Valley Library, the Community Recreation Center and school space which is made available to the public under a cooperative arrangement between the City and the School Districts. Private and non-profit facilities within the City include the Marin Theater Company, the Outdoor Art Club and several small commercial art galleries. Several of Mill Valley's churches will also make their facilities available for community use. Other cultural events, such as the Mill Valley Film Festival, are held at a variety of locations within the community. Often, events that are interested in locating in Mill Valley have difficulty finding sufficient available space.

In recent years, as well as in the 1975 General Plan, community interest has been expressed in the development of a community center that would provide a facility for entertainment and cultural events. At this time the only facility within the community that is adequate for ongoing programs of events is the Marin Theater Company facility on Miller Avenue. Because of the extensive availability of cultural events and facilities in the Bay Area, local residents will always choose to travel outside the community and Marin County for entertainment.

### **2.5.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

**Intent:** It is the intent of these cultural and recreational policies to provide guidance to the City in developing diverse and expanded opportunities for quality recreation and cultural experiences, in operating within a planned system for maintenance and development of recreational and cultural facilities, programs and services, and in supporting existing programs and facilities whenever possible.



**Policy RC-1: The City shall design and build a new Community Center, if financially feasible.**

**Program RC-1-1:** The City shall negotiate purchase or long-term lease of School District land adjacent to the Middle School for the Community Center.

**Time Frame:** Within six months of Plan approval.

**Program RC-1-2:** The City shall hire an architect to design a facility that is consistent with the space plan developed during the needs assessment study and reflects the character of Mill Valley, is aesthetically pleasing, and provides an environment conducive to creative programming.

**Time Frame:** In process.

**Program RC-1-3:** The City shall appoint a finance committee to pursue all feasible financial alternatives to fund the Community Center.

**Time Frame:** In progress.

**Program RC-1-4:** The City shall construct the new Community Center.

**Time Frame:** Within three to five years of Plan approval, as funding is available.

**Policy RC-2: The Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission shall prepare an updated Master Plan for Bay Front Park that considers active recreation needs, passive recreation needs and protection of wildlife habitat.**

**Program RC-2-1:** The Parks and Recreation Commission shall hold public hearings on the future of Bay Front Park.

**Time Frame:** Dependent upon funding availability.



**Program RC-2-2:** The Parks and Recreation Department shall develop a revised Master Plan for Bay Front Park to incorporate the preferred uses established by Program RC 3.1 above.

**Time Frame:** Dependent on the completion of RC 3.1 program.

**Program RC-2-3:** The Parks and Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works shall implement the Revised Bay Front Master Plan.

**Time Frame:** Dependent on funding.

**Policy RC-3:** The City shall preserve and restore its network of “lanes”. Official abandonment of any such easements or fee simple rights of way should occur only in the most extraordinary circumstances and then only by vote of the City Council. Where there is any doubt whatever about the advisability of outright abandonment, private improvements shall be allowed only through a revocable encroachment permit and no structure of any permanence shall be built on or over the lane.

**Program RC-3-1:** The Parks and Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works shall maintain a system of pathways, lanes and steps. Where appropriate, amenities, such as benches, interpretive signs and trash receptacles, shall be incorporated into the system.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan as funds are available.

**Program RC-3-2:** All the City’s “lanes”, including those that have been neglected or abandoned, shall be inventoried. The inventory shall give the legal status of each lane and shall categorize the lane according to present condition, expense of maintaining, expense of developing, and importance of the lane. The Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments shall encourage the active cooperation of neighborhood associations and individuals with the inventory process, and especially with the funding of improvements. A citizens’ Lanes and Steps Committee shall be established to coordinate this program. The inventory shall be done by citizens on a volunteer basis, rather than with City funds.

**Time Frame:** Within one year of Plan adoption.

**Program RC-3-3:** The City should provide adequate funding to keep the existing system of pathways, lanes and steps safe and accessible. Certain paths may be designated for maintenance through funding, in whole or in part, by neighborhood associations, other organizations, or individuals.

**Time Frame:** Dependent on funding availability.

**Program RC-3-4:** Where new pathways, lanes, or steps are created as a result of new development, the project developer shall construct, and if appropriate maintain, the new facilities.

**Time Frame:** As development occurs.

**Policy RC-4:** The City shall maintain the Municipal Library as a high-quality, independent facility serving the greater Mill Valley Community.

**Program RC-4-1:** The City shall continue to fund the Library and its programs at a level sufficient to serve the community.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

## **2.6 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

### **2.6.1 Existing Conditions and Projections**

#### **Introduction**

Almost half the Planning Area, in terms of land area and population, is outside the Mill Valley City Limits. The entire area shares many public facilities, such as the post office, water services, fire protection, schools, and some sewer services. The unincorporated Tamalpais Planning Area, including the neighborhoods of Tamalpais Valley, Almonte, Homestead Valley, Muir Woods Park and Manzanita-Shoreline, is served by a variety of local agencies. These neighborhoods, with the exception of Muir Woods Park, are all included in the Mill Valley Urban Service Area as defined in the Marin Countywide Plan. The Mill Valley Sphere of Influence includes all of the Tamalpais Planning Area as well as West Alto.

This section will consider and evaluate the local or regional public service providers, including fire and police protection, schools, water supply, flood control, sanitary sewer service, road maintenance and parks and recreation programs. **Table 2.6** lists these service providers and shows the agencies that serve each of the area's neighborhoods. Because public services are provided by a variety of local agencies, the costs of connection fees, on-going service and maintenance varies considerably throughout the Planning Area. The quality of service also varies. These inconsistencies may be factors which contribute to market pressures for development within and without the City of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.

## **Water Supply**

The entire joint City/County Planning Area, and a much larger area which includes all of southern and central Marin County, is served by the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD). The MMWD's current supply is primarily from rainfall captured in several reservoirs on MMWD lands located in the area. The district also purchases 4,000 acre-feet of water per year from the Sonoma County Water District. The quality of the district's water is considered to be very high. Because the system is rainfall dependent, the supply of water varies in periods of drought or surplus. Historically, the supply has been sufficient such that utilization of conservation methods has been able to compensate for low supplies in years of minimum rainfall.

In early April 1989, when their total water commitments reached 34,900 acre feet per year, MMWD imposed a moratorium on water connections for all new residential and commercial developments. This moratorium will remain in place until the Water District obtains an additional long term water source. The Water District is currently preparing a Master Plan which includes evaluating various options for obtaining up to 14,000 acre feet per year of additional water capacity to serve future development. While small amounts of water may be released during the moratorium, obtaining a new long-term supply will require voter approval of the funding may take as long as five years.

A number of concerns have been expressed by local residents about the implications of obtaining water from sources outside the area. One concern is that while the District's current high quality water supply is considered an asset to homeowners in the area, water obtained from other sources may not meet these same high standards. As a result, mixing this new water with current

**Table 2.6**  
**CITY OF MILL VALLEY/TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA**  
**PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS**

	Sanitary Sewer Service	Water Service	Storm Drainage & Flood Protection	Road Maintenance	Refuse Collection	Police	Fire	Schools	Recreation
Mill Valley	City of Mill Valley via SASM	Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD)	Mill Valley Department of Public Works (storm drainage) and Marin County Flood Control District	Mill Valley Department of Public Works and private owners	Mill Valley Refuse	Mill Valley Police Department	Mill Valley Fire Dept. in a JPA with the Tamalpais Fire District	Mill Valley School District Tamalpais High School District	Mill Valley Parks and Recreation Department
Tamalpais Valley	Tamalpais Community Services District (TCSD) via SASM for Kay Park area. Re- mainder served by Sausalito-Marín City Plant	MMWD	Marin County Flood Control District (MCFCD)	Marin County Department of Public Works, CalTrans, and private owners	TCSD	Marin County Sheriff	Tamalpais Fire District	Mill Valley School District and Sausalito School District Tamalpais High School District	TCSD and the Tam Valley Improvement Club
Almonte	Almonte Sanitary District via SASM	MMWD	MCFCD	Marin County Dept. of Public Works and private owners	Almonte Sanitary District	Marin County Sheriff	Tamalpais Fire District	Mill Valley School District Tamalpais High School District	Almonte Improvement Club  (social club)
Homestead Valley	Homestead Valley Sanitary District via SASM	MMWD	MCFCD and HVLTL	Marin County Dept. of Public Works and private owners	Homestead Valley Sanitation District	Marin County Sheriff	Tamalpais Fire District	Mill Valley School District Tamalpais High School District	County Service Area 14 and Homestead Valley Land Trust(HVLTL)
Muir Woods Park	Septic Tank System	MMWD	MCFCD	Marin County Dept. of Public Works and private owners	Mill Valley Refuse?	Marin County Sheriff	Marin County Fire District	Mill Valley School District Tamalpais High School District	-
Manzanita Shoreline	Piped to Sausalito-Marín City Plant	MMWD	MCFCD	Marin County Dept. of Public Works and CalTrans	Mill Valley Refuse (Manzanita)? and Bay Cities Refuse (Shoreline)	Marin County Sheriff	Tamalpais Fire District	Sausalito School District Tamalpais High School District	TCSD



supplies could reduce the system's overall water quality. In addition to the effects on the quality of future water, residents have also expressed concern about increasing costs of providing water from new sources which may be passed on to existing MMWD customers. Coordinated planning, water conservation and waste water reclamation for irrigation are all going to be important factors in addressing the long-range water supply issue.

Because of the significant reduction in density which occurred on the former RP properties, as well as the number of projects that went through the planning process and obtained water commitments before the moratorium went into effect, the total additional water needed in the City of Mill Valley through ultimate buildout is now less than 100 acre feet. The remaining buildout potential which does not currently have water commitments, and therefore may have to wait up to five years before water is available, is indicated in **Table 2.7**. The eventual effects of a long-term moratorium on new water connections will likely show up in even greater appreciation in the prices for existing homes and increased pressure to tear down existing homes to use the lot (and the water meter) to build new homes.

**Table 2.7**  
**MILL VALLEY PROJECTS THROUGH ULTIMATE BUILDOUT**  
**WHICH DID NOT HAVE WATER COMMITMENTS**  
**PRIOR TO IMPOSITION OF WATER MORATORIUM IN APRIL 1989**

Ultimate Buildout Potential From All Large Undeveloped Parcels in Mill Valley:	45 new homes (6 m.f.- 39 s.f.)
Ultimate Buildout Potential From Existing Single-Family (s.f.) In-Fill Lots:	95 new s.f. homes
Ultimate Buildout Potential From Subdivisions of Existing Single-Family Lots:	11 new s.f. homes
Ultimate Buildout Potential From New Multi-Family (mf) In-Fill Development:	25 additional m.f. units
City Sponsored Below Market Rate Rental Housing Project:	30 new m.f. units
Ultimate Buildout of New Second Units:	60 new m.f. units
<hr/>	
TOTAL NEW RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT BUILDOUT WITHOUT WATER COMMITMENT:	266 new units (121 m.f. - 145 s.f.)
TOTAL NEW OFFICE & COMMERCIAL SPACE AT BUILDOUT WITHOUT WATER COMMITMENT:	43,000 s.f.

## Sanitation

The joint City/County Planning Area includes five sanitation entities: City of Mill Valley; Tamalpais Community Services District (TCSD); Almonte Sanitary District; Homestead Sanitary District; and Alto Sanitary District. These, plus the Richardson Bay Sanitary District, have joined together in a Joint Powers Agreement to create the “Sewerage Agencies of Southern Marin” (SASM). This agency, administered by the City of Mill Valley, has constructed and operates joint use (that is, serving more than one member) lift stations and force mains. The individual member agencies maintain their collections systems by their own staff or by private contracts. SASM treats all the sewage of its members, with one exception: most of residential areas in Tamalpais Valley are sewered into a joint plant with the City of Sausalito; only its Kay Park portion (the commercial area south the junction of Almonte Boulevard and Highway 1) sewers into the SASM plant.

Each of the six SASM members has an allocated share in the capacity of the treatment plant. While total capacity is adequate, disparities in the remaining entitlements of the members are developing. Growth within Homestead Valley, Mill Valley and Richardson Bay is comfortably within their respective shares, leaving excess capacity for approximately ten percent or more expansion. Growth in the Alto district, primarily east of Highway 101, leaves about 7 percent excess capacity, the Almonte district is approaching capacity and growth in the Kay Park portion of Tamalpais Valley has already exceeded the TCSD allocation.

Because the TCSD allocation is the smallest of the six members, this over-run is not significant in terms of the plant's overall capacity. However, if further development is to be allowed in the Tam Junction area, additional sewage allocations will be necessary. SASM has agreed to study this issue and develop a plan of action to resolve further capacity allocation disputes. One potential program would be to adopt alternative standards for measuring wastewater discharge by size of home. Another approach would be to consider transferring entitlements among members. A final strategy is to reevaluate the actual capacity of the SASM plant by determining the actual dry weather capacity of the treatment plant. At the time the Joint Powers Agreement was prepared the sewer allocations were based on “equivalent dwelling units” rather than actual flows. If actual demands are less than planned treatment flows, this analysis may show there is no shortage of capacity for the TCSD.

Muir Woods Park is almost completely served by individual septic tank systems. Since 1972, the Marin County Division of Environmental Control has been documenting complaints of failing septic tank systems in this area. Many of these systems were installed and constructed at a time when the regulations and controls for septic tank systems were not as stringent as they are at the present time. Additionally, this area is poorly suited for septic tank systems as Franciscan shale and other rocky ground strata are predominant in this area. Tree and plant root intrusion also create severe problems on drainfield trenches which subsequently block the flow of effluent. Because these problems have occurred, the City has permitted, on a case-by-case basis, some single-family units on septic tanks in Muir Woods Park which are contiguous with the City boundaries to connect to the City sewer system.

As further discussed under Fire Protection, annexation of Alto to Mill Valley has recently been discussed. Such an annexation would involve not only the extension of City fire protection to the area (and its withdrawal from the Alto Richardson Bay Fire District), but also the continuation or termination of current service with the Alto Sanitary District. The bulk of this small district is in Alto, and the balance is east of Highway 101 in Strawberry. This latter area is sewered to the west under the freeway, and the entire district is sewered through Mill Valley to the SASM plant. Though the Alto Sanitary District could continue operation after annexation, this would be contrary to the practice of the City sewerage all City areas. The LAFCO "zero" sphere of influence for the district in fact contemplates separation of the eastern portion of Alto from the Alto Sanitary District and suggests that this area be annexed to the Richardson Bay Sanitary District. That would probably be a LAFCO condition of approval of any future Alto annexation to Mill Valley. The remaining question would be whether the sewerage of the area east of Highway 101 should be redesigned to be integrated into the Richardson Bay system, which would require a pumping plant, or could remain as is, that is, sewerage by gravity through Mill Valley. Elimination of the Alto Sanitary District would require a minor revision to the SASM Joint Power Agreement in terms of membership and treatment capacity allocations.

### **Storm Drainage and Flood Control**

In general, areas adjacent to Richardson Bay and the various creeks within the Planning Area are within the 100-year flood zone, as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA prepares Flood Insurance Rate Maps which specifically designate the boundaries of these areas that are susceptible to flooding.



The Marin County Flood Control District is responsible for maintenance of the flood control improvements along Mill Creek, Arroyo Corte Madera Del Presidio, Warner Canyon Creek and Sutton Manor Creek within the City Limits.

The City's boundaries generally follow topography, avoiding situations where unincorporated urban areas drain into City storm drainage systems. The reverse is also the case; the City does not drain into the unincorporated area. A small portion of the Town of Corte Madera, near Sausalito Avenue, as well as all of Homestead Valley and West Alto, do drain into Mill Valley. The Mill Valley Public Works Department maintains other storm drainage improvements within the City.

In the Tamalpais Planning Area, the lowest area and the area most subject to flooding is the business and residential area bordered by Ross Drive, Marin Avenue, Tennessee Valley Road, Shoreline Highway and Richardson Bay where elevations are below the levee elevation of Coyote Creek. The Marin County Flood Control District maintains flood control improvements in this area.

### **Fire Protection**

In general, fire protection within the study area is adequate. Presently, the City of Mill Valley has a Joint Powers Agreement with the Tamalpais Fire District to protect the District's territory which includes both the City and the unincorporated neighborhoods of Tamalpais Valley, Homestead Valley, and Almonte.

The Muir Woods Park area is protected by the County Fire Department which has a fire station located near the Mountain Home Inn on the Panoramic Highway. While the County is able to adequately serve homes in this area, access to homes along the east end of Edgewood Avenue (circuitous access for the County to the intermixed County and City properties in this area) and east of the Mountain Home Inn (where City boundaries include almost inaccessible terrain) could cause delays in emergency service. The California Department of Forestry does not automatically respond to fires within City boundaries, even though they constitute as in this case, wildlands. It does, however, automatically respond to wildland fires in unincorporated areas.

Following closure of the Alto Fire House, the City temporarily provided protection to the Alto area. The Alto Richardson Bay Fire District had previously considered relocating its other station in Strawberry to the Strawberry Point School, which is a more central location, but has now abandoned this plan. Annexation of Alto to Mill Valley has also been discussed.

A discussion of wildfire issues and policies is located in the Public Health and Safety Section.

### **Police Protection**

The Mill Valley police station is centrally located at the Public Safety Building on Hamilton Drive. The City's topography and road network provides relatively direct access for police patrolling and responses.

Sheriff services for the Tamalpais Planning Area are not as adequate as that provided by the City. Responses are from the substation in Marin City, and the only access from there to the Planning Area is via Highway 101. On weekends, congestion along this route can impede response time. In addition, there are some unincorporated areas which can only be reached by passing through the City. These include the frontage along Miller Avenue (alternate approaches are circuitous) and several stretches of Edgewood in Muir Woods Park.

### **Road Maintenance**

While public roads within the City of Mill Valley are maintained by the Department of Public Works, there are many roads within the City Limits that are privately owned and maintained. Edgewood Avenue, both east (within Homestead Valley) and west (within Muir Woods Park) of Sequoia Valley Road has presented problems for roadway maintenance because it is necessary to pass through City territory to get to County roads. This problem could be mitigated by including all of Edgewood west of Sequoia Valley Road, including abutting properties to the north, in the city, and by including in the City those dead-end roads leading off from Edgewood/Molino to the south into Homestead Valley. These include (as well as abutting properties) Douglas Drive, Cedarwood Lane, and Cape Court.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The Mill Valley Parks and Recreation Department provides a full range of recreational facilities and services which are utilized by all Planning Area residents. In addition, Tamalpais Valley, Almonte and Homestead Valley have local community centers, parks, recreation and/or open space areas provided through their local community service districts and local social clubs.

## **Schools**

The Mill Valley School District (Grades K-8) and the Tamalpais Union School District (Grades 9-12) provide educational service to the City of Mill Valley and most of the Tamalpais Planning Area. While the Mill Valley School District previously closed several schools because of a significant decline in the number of students, enrollment is presently at or near capacity at all of the elementary schools currently being utilized. As a result, the District is considering adding portable classrooms at Strawberry and/or Tam Valley schools. Middle School (Grades 6-8) and Tamalpais High School (Grades 9-12) are both currently operating at less than capacity.

In its long-range planning, the Mill Valley School District must estimate pupil generation rates and project future demand for classrooms and services. Changes in household size, coupled with the rate and amount of new residential development in the Planning Area, are important factors in this planning.

Optimum utilization of school facilities is also an important issue in the District's long-range planning. This may result in combining educational facilities at some schools. If this happens, other schools would be available for alternative uses. For economic reasons, the School District has decided that leasing is a better option for re-use of surplus schools than sale and redevelopment of school sites. Within the City Limits, Edna-Maguire School has been identified as a unique site because it is large in size and can be flexibly used. Because of this, it should be retained permanently as a potential educational facility, and should not be sold or redeveloped.

As part of this General Plan Revision Project, the City looked at options for interim uses as well as options for redevelopment of each of the School District properties. The key findings of this analysis included:



- Because of the uniqueness and value of the sites' central locations, flat topography and available utilities, if any of the sites are determined to be surplus to the School District's needs, they should be used for some form of public use (e.g. educational/recreational facilities or affordable housing).
- The City will work with the District in addressing current and future financial pressures and their need to generate funds over time.
- Any non-school use of a school site should be compatible with the generally low density single-family residential development surrounding each of the school sites.

While the School District may wish to maximize income, the City found that each school site has some degree of environmental and/or traffic constraints which may limit future development potential. Additionally, most sites are located within well-established residential neighborhoods. Through this Plan revision process, the City has determined that low-intensity office and assembly uses, such as those currently at Edna Maguire School, are the most appropriate interim uses for the school facilities. Single-family residential development compatible with the density in the surrounding neighborhood or recreational uses are considered to be appropriate uses, if any of the school properties are fully redeveloped.

The City looked at all of the school sites in terms of their potential for below market rate housing, and concluded that any of the sites would be appropriate for multi-family rental or senior citizen housing. Because such uses are consistent with the Housing Element goals to increase the local supply of affordable housing, the City has committed to continue working with the School District if a site or sites are determined to be surplus to the District's long-term needs.

Beyond site specific land use issues, it is the City's intent to encourage the School District to continue to maintain a high quality educational program. A strong educational program is an essential component of a healthy community. To facilitate this, it is essential that the City and the District continue to cooperatively address land use issues, joint maintenance of school facilities, the development of a community center on a portion of the Middle School property, and the possibility of using a school site (or sites) for low and moderate-income family rental housing.



## **2.6.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

**Intent:** It is the City's intent to work with other public agencies to provide public services to City residents and planning for the ultimate provision of services to residents of the Mill Valley Urban Service Area.

**Policy PS-1:** The City shall not encourage the extension of City public services outside its boundaries.

**Program PS-1-1:** Requests and applications for the provision of public services that are operated by the City (e.g. sewer service) outside the boundaries of the City, shall be strongly discouraged and shall only be approved where compelling reasons and unique circumstances exist.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan as requests and applications are submitted.

**Policy PS-2:** The City shall coordinate with the Marin Municipal Water District and the other cities within the District to assure that an adequate supply of high quality of water is available for local residents.

**Program PS-2-1:** The City shall meet on a periodic basis with the MMWD and surrounding communities, and be involved in discussions of and planning for future water supply and water quality.

**Time Frame:** On-going throughout the life of the Plan.

**Program PS-2-2:** The City shall continue to require the use of water conserving techniques, as required by applicable codes, in all new buildings and landscaping.

**Time Frame:** As development applications are submitted during the life of the Plan.

**Policy PS-3:** The City recognizes the importance of a strong public school system to serve the community. To that end, the City will continue to work in close cooperation with the Mill Valley and Tamalpais High School Districts on issues of common concern.

**Program PS-3-1:** The City will work with the School Districts to jointly address any changes in school sites or facilities that may result from changes in school-age population or in school funding.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

[Note: See also Policies RC-1 and H-14.]

## **2.7 SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND LAFCO POLICIES**

### **2.7.1 Existing Conditions and Projections**

#### **Introduction**

A “sphere of influence” means the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). In practice, many LAFCOs have used a time horizon less than “ultimate,” often ten years. Spheres are usually tied to City and County general plans, and both may be revised from time to time. Sphere boundaries may be larger than present agency boundaries (typically where outward urban growth is anticipated), identical with present boundaries (typically within a stabilized urban area), smaller than present boundaries (indicating some territory should be detached; for example, the sphere for the Tamalpais Community Service District indicates territory within the GGNRA should be detached), or “zero” (indicating the agency should be dissolved; for example, the West Alto Sanitary District is shown as being dissolved and its services absorbed by Mill Valley and the Richardson Bay Sanitary District).

The Marin County LAFCO has tended toward the “ultimate” time horizon. However, within these spheres it uses the concept of the “urban service area,” delineating where urban services (police, fire, water, and sewer) can best be provided over the next five to ten years. LAFCO has adopted policies related to the Marin Countywide Plan. Within the plan’s city-centered corridor, of which the study area is a part, these policies encourage urban development to occur within cities where municipal services are available.

#### **City of Mill Valley**

The City’s Sphere of Influence includes the previously identified unincorporated areas of Tamalpais Valley, Homestead Valley, Almonte, Muir Woods Park, and West Alto. The urban service area within this sphere excludes Muir Woods Park (no sewers, difficult emergency access) and the area within the GGNRA west of the south end of Tennessee Valley Road. In addition, the Sphere of Influence plan includes, as an “area to be discussed further”, the Strawberry area east of Highway 101. Subsequent studies of this area have been inconclusive, but it appears unlikely at this time that any of it will be included in the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence.

## Study Area Special Districts

With the exception of Alto-Richardson Bay Fire Protection District, all the special districts providing services to the Tam Planning Area are included in Mill Valley's Sphere of Influence. LAFCO has assigned "interim" sphere boundaries to these districts which follow the present boundaries of the public service agencies. The "interim" spheres will remain in effect until such time as a district is annexed into the City or consolidated with another district (through reorganization).

### **City and Public Service Agency Boundary Issues**

The City's boundaries are generally defined by topography and the concept of direct access from the center of the City to its outer reaches. This bowl or amphitheater is unusual among cities and has contributed to the community's sense of identity, civic unity, and a viable downtown, as well as to the efficiency of providing City services. Except for Alto, the boundaries between the City and the districts, avoid awkward islands and peninsulas. However, at some points on the periphery of the City boundaries there are issues which have arisen:

1. At the eastern boundary, where the City has extended out of the hills shaping the bowl and toward the bay flatlands, Highway 101 seems the logical division between Mill Valley and Strawberry/Tiburon. All of the area west of Highway 101, except the remainder of Alto, has been annexed to the City. It should also be noted that annexation of the western portion of Alto would give the City control of the East Blithedale/Tower Drive intersection, a key City entrance. Drawing the Sphere of Influence boundary at Highway 101 would be a public policy statement that the City is not interested in the ultimate inclusion of any part of Strawberry in the City.
2. At the southern boundary questions have arisen regarding the appropriate Sausalito-Mill Valley division. Earlier discussion noted that the Mill Valley Urban Service Area does not extend as far south as its Sphere of Influence, and that should the Shoreline Master Plan area (the area including the Shoreline Office Center to the Heliport) be annexed to Sausalito, land use planning at one of the two entrances to Mill Valley would be handled by another city. In addition, if this happens, the area would have to be detached from the Tamalpais Fire District. Consideration should be given to revising the sphere boundary between Sausalito and Mill Valley to include the Shoreline Highway exit from Highway 101 in Mill Valley's Sphere of Influence.



3. Several parcels along the southwest side of the Miller Avenue business strip, between Reed Street and Gomez Way are outside the City Limits in an area where there is no natural or topographical boundary between Mill Valley and Homestead Valley, and to a lesser extent Almonte. The fact that the street and sidewalk are in the City and the adjoining properties are in the County results in minor problems of policing and more significant problems for regulating development. Annexation of the properties fronting directly on Miller Avenue is appropriate.
4. The present boundary along Edgewood Road is inefficient, particularly for the County. As noted under the discussion of road maintenance, County crews must go through the City to maintain the section of this road west of Sequoia Valley Road. This problem could be eliminated by annexing all of the road, and all of the properties fronting on the road to the City. Also as noted, though Edgewood east of Sequoia Valley is in the City, the small dead-end streets along its south side are in the County, including Douglas Drive, Cedarwood Lane, and Cape Court, as well as some private roads. This also causes response inefficiencies for the Sheriff. The question here is whether the City boundary should be moved to the south.
5. Previous intrusion of the City boundary into Muir Woods Park, along Edgewood Avenue North, including some areas inaccessible from the City, results in an inefficient provision of services.
6. The Larkspur City Limits include considerable permanent open space lands within Blithedale Canyon. Since the City of Mill Valley provides first fire response to this area, the City boundaries should be redrawn in this area to match the watershed line.
7. Currently, the Sausalito School District boundaries extend within the Tamalpais Valley area along the eastside of Tennessee Valley Road, requiring some children within Tamalpais Valley to attend school in Sausalito. This boundary line should be adjusted for more efficient service.
8. Currently, the Warner Ridge, Johnson et al. and Werber properties located adjacent to the Scott Highlands neighborhood are located within the Larkspur School District. This boundary line should be adjusted for more efficient service.

### **2.7.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

**Intent:** It is the intent of these policies that the City address jurisdictional and public service boundary conflicts that are currently resulting in inefficient provision of urban services.

**Policy SI-1: The City shall work with Marin County , other affected agencies and LAFCO to resolve current inefficiencies in the boundary for the City of Mill Valley.**

**Program SI-1-1:** The City shall favorably consider any request for annexation of the Alto area, west of Highway 101.

**Time Frame:** Upon request by area residents.

**Program SI-1-2:** The City shall favorably consider any requests for annexation of those parcels fronting on Miller Avenue which are currently within County jurisdiction.

**Time Frame:** Upon request by area property owner or as new development occurs.

**Program SI-1-3:** The City shall determine an appropriate City boundary line along Edgewood Avenue which reduces inefficiencies in terms of road maintenance and emergency services, and favorably consider any requests for annexation of those parcels currently within County jurisdiction.

**Time Frame:** Upon request from the property owners or within twelve months of adoption of the Plan.

**Program SI-1-4:** The City shall consider the Edgewood Avenue (North) right-of-way as an appropriate City boundary line in the area near the Mountain Home Inn and shall favorably consider any requests for annexation of those parcels located North of Edgewood Avenue which are currently within County jurisdiction.

**Time Frame:** Upon request from the property owners or within twelve months of Plan adoption.

**Program SI-1-5:** The City shall begin discussions with Larkspur and LAFCO to facilitate the transfer of land in the Blithedale Canyon Watershed from Larkspur to Mill Valley.

**Time Frame:** Within eighteen months of Plan adoption.

**Policy SI-2:** The City shall work with the Marin County and LAFCO to revise the boundary lines of the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence and Urban Service Area in order to reduce inefficiencies in the provision of public services.

**Program SI-2-1:** The City shall seek to adjust the boundaries of its Sphere of Influence and Urban Service Area to follow Highway 101 along the eastern edge, south to include the Shoreline Master Plan Area and beyond Tennessee Valley Road on the southern edge.

**Time Frame:** Within 12 months of Plan adoption.

## **2.8 OPEN SPACE**

### **2.8.1 Existing Conditions**

Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area are located between the upper end of Richardson Bay, a shallow arm of San Francisco Bay, and the southeast face of Mt. Tamalpais. These communities are defined by several ridges that extend down toward the Bay from 2,570-foot Mt. Tamalpais. The smaller valleys that make up the area are the result of long erosion of the Mt. Tamalpais land mass and deposition of alluvium in the lowlands, which together with marine sediments of the Bay formed the once extensive marshlands and mudflats around the Bay. Mill Valley is a branched watershed; two main stream systems and their tributaries drain the southeast flank and ridges of Mt. Tamalpais into Richardson Bay. A third stream system drains the southwest flank, forming the Tamalpais Planning Area .

The combination of natural conditions--Mt. Tamalpais, with its ridges, valleys, and waterways, and the Bay marshlands--compose the physical and aesthetic setting for the community. The merging of the town with the flatlands and shoreline of Richardson Bay links Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area to the greater San Francisco Bay Region, with its diversity of topography and vegetation types, micro-environments, and habitats, from open bay water to steep, dry, chaparral ridges, and deep, moist redwood ravines.



A survey of the existing natural resources in the study area indicates that, although all of the native communities and habitats of the Bay Area are represented, the natural landscape has changed, as it has through the Bay Area. Natural succession (the process by which a plant or animal community alters its own environment to the extent that the changed conditions lead to replacement by species which are better adapted) has occurred; and “unnatural” succession has occurred to the extent that humans have consciously or unconsciously brought about changed conditions, such as introducing “exotic” (non-native) plants, suppressing periodic fires, and grazing domestic livestock. The urban extent of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area no longer stops at Richardson Bay, but now surrounds the tip of the Bay, leaving an ever-narrowing margin of shoreline habitats as part of the town’s natural heritage.

The principal open space resources in the community include the creek systems, which have both functional (drainage and flood control) and aesthetic values; the biotic resources--vegetation and diverse wildlife habitats; and the scenic values created by the setting which the natural factors provide for the town of Mill Valley and the Tam Area. The native biotic resources include redwood groves, mixed stands of broad-leaf evergreens, oak woodland, chaparral, coastal scrub, grasslands, marshes, and mudflats. The non-native, introduced species also contribute to the biotic resources and, in fact, dominate the urban portions of the setting. (A more detailed description of these biotic resources is provided on a subarea basis later in this section.)

Natural features are the primary ingredients that establish the visual character of the community. Major ridgelines, which still have relatively few residential structures on them, sharply define the north, west, and south limits of the community. This sense of visual containment and separation from adjoining communities is reinforced by lower hill forms such as Alto and Kite Hills, and Shelter Ridge, which help define the entrance points to the community. The flat marshlands, mudflats, bayfront parklands, and water of Upper Richardson Bay contrast with the rugged hill landscape and open up opportunities for expansive views toward San Francisco and, from the opposite direction, the chance to view all of these open space features as a unit.

## **Creeks**

Within the City Limits (an area of approximately 4.75 square miles), streams and tributaries form four drainage basins on the southeast flank and ridges of Mt. Tamalpais. The overall Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio basin extends southeast from over 2,500 feet in elevation on Mt. Tamalpais to sea level at Richardson Bay, covering an area of 6.0 square miles. The basin



generally slopes from a westerly to easterly direction, forming four sub-basins: (1) Arroyo Corte Madera Creek in west Blithedale Canyon; (2) the Cascade Creek basin; (3) the Warner Creek basin; and (4) the Reed Creek basin (Homestead Valley). The Salt Creek basin (Scott Valley and Sutton Manor) extends southerly from over 400 feet elevation in the Town of Corte Madera to sea level at Richardson Bay, and is situated west of U.S. 101. The seasonally heavy fresh water flows from the entire watershed help to flush the marshes and harbor of Richardson Bay.

Coyote Creek is the main stream in Tam Valley. From its source in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Southwest flanks of Mt. Tamalpais, it descends through the Valley and has been in part redirected and channelized to run parallel to Shoreline Highway. The creek crosses under the highway just south of Tam Junction, and empties into Richardson Bay. The capacity of the lower creek is maintained by periodic dredging in order to prevent severe flooding.

The integrity of this network of streams, ravines, and springs that descend abruptly from the upper reaches of the mountain down through the center of the City and its neighboring valleys is often threatened by human actions. Throughout the watershed, grading, excavation, vegetation removal, and replacement of natural ground surface by impervious structures and paved surfaces have led to flooding and erosion of channel banks. Along the creek channels, construction of bridges, roads, culverts, closely abutting residences, and other structures have led to disruption of creekside vegetation, obstruction of creek flows, erosion, and maintenance problems. Where portions of the creeks are exposed to close by urban development, litter is easily disposed of and accumulates. Public access to the creeks is virtually impossible except in upper reaches.

### **Shoreline as an Open Space Amenity**

The shoreline of upper Richardson Bay, both within Mill Valley City Limits and in the Tamalpais Planning Area, was once an extensive marsh system. Now it consists of a series of small vestigial tidal marshes, varying in size and condition, and filled developed and undeveloped land. The early marshes of Richardson Bay - prior to about 1930 - extended into Alto, up Miller Avenue to La Goma, into Tamalpais and Tennessee Valleys, into the area now occupied by Strawberry Shopping Center, and around deSilva Island. Gradually, diking and filling have greatly reduced the total marsh acreage, while concomitant siltation from development in the watershed has

moved marsh lands far forward into the bay itself, substituting former open water with shallow mudflats and new marshes. Remains of the old marsh have been fragmented by re-routing of creeks entering the bay and by dredging of the harbor. The original, pre-Gold Rush shoreline is almost entirely obliterated.

The result of all these modifications is an “unnatural” shoreline, in Mill Valley as well as in County lands. In spite of modifications, the shoreline area retains significant natural features - a diversity of plants associated with tidal and non-tidal salt marshes and important refuge and feeding areas for migrating and resident shorebirds and water fowl.

Typically, marsh plants are distributed according to an elevation gradient relative to tidal submergence. The lowest emergent plant - subject to the most frequent and prolonged submergence daily - is Pacific cordgrass (*Spartina foliosa*), which colonizes mudflats as they approach an elevation permitting daily tidal exposure. Cordgrass is known for its high productivity as a food source in detrital form to a chain of organisms extending into the bay (estuary) and beyond. In Mill Valley, cordgrass is represented in the marshes adjacent to the Redwood Highway Frontage Road at Hamilton Drive (near Goodman's) and in the small channels in the upper tip of Richardson Bay, near the P.G. & E. substation on Roque Moraes. Narrow bands grow on the banks of the harbor. In the County portions of Upper Richardson Bay, the Tamalpais Preserve (Bothin Marsh) area near Tam Junction has extensive colonies of cordgrass that have developed over the past two decades following removal of tidegates and resumption of tidal action. Coyote Creek banks also support bands of cordgrass, although these are periodically removed (every six to eight years) during dredging for flood control. Cordgrass has also re-established in the large marsh opposite the playing fields of Tamalpais High School, as a result of breaching of the levee and resumption of tidal action. This latter area is in both City and County.

Middle levels of the salt marsh are dominated by pickleweed but also support a diversity of plants adapted to less frequent tidal submergence than cordgrass. Pickleweed also contributes food in detrital form to the animal life of the estuary. This is the most extensive plant association in the marshes and is well represented in several marshes on city-owned lands west of the harbor, on both sides of Corte Madera del Presidio Creek. In a small marsh adjoining Middle School, pickleweed occupies most of the area. Pickleweed also occupies much of the marsh opposite

Tamalpais High School playing field (in both City and County) and occurs at medium elevations at the mouth of Coyote Creek in the Tamalpais Preserve (Bothin Marsh) area, as well as along the Manzanita and Shoreline Center areas, south of Richardson Bay Bridge.

Upper margins of the marsh, infrequently inundated by high tide but subject to high levels of soil salinity, are occupied by salt grass and several associates. Marshes in both Mill Valley and the County include limited amounts of this association around the upper periphery of pickleweed marshes. These marshes are also the habitat for Birdsbeak (*Cordylanthus mazitimus*), an endangered plant.

Only a few small areas of non-tidal, seasonal marsh remain in the shorelands of either City or County around upper Richardson Bay. On both sides of the realigned Coyote Creek, vestigial marshes remain, wetted only by extreme high tides. In their present condition, these areas offer useful habitat in the fall and winter, following the onset of the rainy season. They could also be restored to more complete tidal action.

The large, formerly diked seasonal marsh opposite Tamalpais High School playing field demonstrates how readily tidal action can restore a viable marsh. After the levee was breached, patches of pickleweed began to spread, and cordgrass re-established in drainage channels. Salt grass, brass-buttons, and salt-bush, aggressive colonizers of disturbed marshes, also have become established. The diversity of bird species using the area has also increased since tidal restoration.

The lands previously filled for use as the Bayfront Park offer shoreline open space opportunities. In those portions of the area that are not landscaped, vegetation consists predominantly of opportunistic grasses, annuals, and woody plant species such as toyon and coyote brush. In the absence of further landscaping, natural succession to a coastal scrub community would probably occur. These portions of the “park” are at present used for passive recreation.

The preceding description of the open space character of Mill Valley provides a general overview of the community’s natural resources. Although much of the open space “backdrop” for Mill Valley is under permanent public protection, a number of critically visible remaining open space areas in the City are contained within six major privately owned, undeveloped parcels of land. These are discussed below.



## Remaining Open Space Areas in Mill Valley

### Kite Hill

Kite Hill is one of the easternmost extensions of the hillside and ridge system that comprises Mt. Tamalpais. The 65-acre area is surrounded on the south, east, and west by residential development with its associated introduced trees and ornamental landscape plantings. To the north, trees and shrubs, largely native but augmented by residential plantings, form an essentially unbroken corridor of cover that connects Kite Hill, by way of Northridge, with the extensive undeveloped slopes of Mt. Tamalpais. The upper Richardson Bay saltmarshes that formerly abutted the southeastern toe of Kite Hill are now large filled and the area is fully developed with the commercial structures of the Alto Bowl. In the foreground of Kite Hill, two large three million gallon water tanks dominate the north-central part of the site.

The bulk of the site is covered with annual grassland, dominated by non-native species such as wild oats, brome grass, wild rye, barley, and filligree. Several colorful native herbaceous species are common in the grassland, such as soap plant, checkerbloom, owl's cloves, lupine, buttercup, and California poppy. Where the grassland has been disturbed by grading and grazing, teasel, pampas grass, milkthistle, radish, plantain, black mustard and fennel form dense, weedy patches within and along the margins of the grassland. Non-native Scotch and French broom and native coyote bush, all aggressive shrub invaders, have become established over large parts of the grassland, particularly in areas adjacent to natural scrub and oak woodland habitat or in places that have been heavily grazed or eroded by the horses that occupied the hill for many years.

The grasslands of Kite Hill are important forage areas for many forms of animal life. Both large and small mammals, such as blacktail deer, pocket gophers, moles, and many species of birds, feed on plant material and insects of the grasslands and nest or den there as well. American kestrels, land redtailed hawks hunt large insects, rodents and rabbits.

Oak woodland occupies the steep northwest-facing hillside along the western boundary and the east-facing slopes of Kite Hill immediately north and east of the water tank. Coast live oak is the dominate tree species of the woodland. California bay and madrone are also common. There is a well-developed understory of hazel and fern. Poison oak, coyote bush and broom are abundant along the disturbed woodland margins. The oak woodland on Kite Hill is an extension of many acres of relatively uninterrupted woodland, scrub, and chaparral that cover the Northridge open space lands and the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais beyond.



Trees in the oak woodland provide cover, foraging, nesting, and perching sites for numerous species of birds. Acorns are an important source of food for many animals, and the moist and decaying litter on the forest floor supports an insect population which also constitutes a food source for larger animals. Most of the mammals and many of the birds that spend part of their time in other habitat types on Kite Hill use the oak woodland for cover and for additional foraging and hunting opportunities. Deer in particular make much use of the woodland, browsing on young oaks and using the relatively dense cover for daytime protection.

Low-growing, shrubby plants cover an estimated 25 to 35 percent of Kite Hill. The scrub vegetation has a variable composition of both woody and herbaceous native plants, and invasive introduced species. Coyote bush and French broom appear to be co-dominant species in the scrub, which also includes such plants as blackberry, immature oaks, poison oak, sword fern and mugwort. Occasional small oaks have become established in the scrub, in the ravines, and in scattered locations within the grassland. Overgrazing and trampling by horses pastured here has undoubtedly favored the establishment of the scrub vegetation, especially the invasive non-native species. The dense vegetation of the scrub provides good cover for resident and transient wildlife. Wildlife food sources in the scrub include insects, new leaves and buds, poison oak berries, and blackberries.

In the hilltop immediately adjacent to the oak woodland and close to Northridge open space on the western side of the site is a long, plateau-like expanse that was previously graded as a source of fill and a second home is being constructed at the end of Escalon Drive. A single-family residence now occupies the southwest end of this "plateau." Other disturbed areas on the site include the fire roads, road embankments, access roads around the water tank, and deep, eroded gullies emanating from old sites of grading and excavation. Some vegetation has begun to recolonize the graded area, although vegetative cover there is generally low and sparse, with some broom and coyote bush along the margins. Pampas grass, another aggressive weed, is now growing on exposed soil between the graded area and the tank. Fennel and teasel dominate the earthworks around the tank. Wildlife habitat values of the disturbed areas, particularly places with little or not vegetation, are minimal. Protective cover is non-existent, and use by humans, horses, and domestic dogs is high.

## Alto Hill (Cal-Fong and Project H Properties)

The undeveloped portion of Alto Hill consists of 60.7 acres of highly visible, generally south-sloping, grassland covered hillside located near the northeastern corner of Mill Valley. Most of the site consists of grazed annual grassland, the only remaining grassland of its size in Mill Valley. Groundcover consists of grasses (wild oat, brome grass, cheat grass, bluegrass and fescue) and native herbaceous plants (brodiaea, milkmaids, tritelliaea, California buttercup, California poppy and common tarweed, in the late summer). Many non-native plants such as teasel, plantain, mustard, vetch, radish and birdweed which have gained a strong hold from grazing and human disturbance. A few native bunch grasses (e.g., Stipa pulchra, or needle-grass) and herbs have been survived in spite of grazing and displacement by invading weedy plants.

Larger woody shrub plants are found in the protected and moist areas. These include plants typical of coast shrublands, such as small coast live oaks, poison oak, coyote bush, broom, and arroyo willow in small drainages. A single madrone stands out in this shrubby community. Within the grassland shrubland, rushes and other moisture-loving plants are found in a seep on the southern portion of the Alto Hill slope; some native wildflowers including California poppy, lupine, and echeveria occur near isolated rock outcrops and on steep slopes. There is a small patch of “escaped”, or abandoned, garden species not far from the southern border of the site, in which rose, periwinkle, sweet peak, and other domestic species are evident.

At the top of the ridge at the northern border of Alto Hill, a small woodland descends the slope, composed of California bay with interior live oak at the edges of the grassland. There is little or no understory in the deeply shaded interior of the woodland. At the western edge of the site, a small riparian woodland follows the alignment of Salt Creek. Although the creek is disturbed, and carries virtually no water in dry months (except for urban landscape irrigation runoff), the creek is bordered by a community of live oak, willows, and California bay, with understory of poison oak, blackberry, ferns, and equisetum (horsetail). This riparian corridor has a high value for wildlife: resident, migrant, and visiting wildlife species find food, water, shelter, shade, roosting and nesting sites as well as a protected corridor for movement from one open area to another.

The extensive grassland provides habitat for a variety of insects, including butterflies, grasshopper, ground bees, bee flies, and harvester ants. These form an important part of the grassland food chain, as they feed on green plants, flower nectar or pollen. Birds of the Alto Hill grassland include insectivorous species such as barn swallow; seed-eaters such as bandtailed pigeon and white crowned, golden crowned and song sparrow; the omnivorous scrub jay and western meadowlark; and birds of prey such as American kestrel, red tailed hawk, and great horned owl. The mammalian community consists of insectivorous shrews, seed-eating mice, herbivorous pocket gophers, jackrabbit, blacktail deer, and omnivorous striped skunk. Predators may include weasel and feral cats.

#### Shelter Ridge (Eucalyptus Terrace Property)

The undeveloped portion of Shelter Ridge encompasses a 17.5-acre westward sloping hillside which drops precipitously on the west and southwest sides toward previously filled baylands and the City Public Safety Building. Opportunistic, “exotic” weedy plant species have established themselves on the property, and anise, Scotch broom, coyote bush and wild oats extend down from a central knoll area. Other vegetation on the site includes lupine, poison oak, sage, California poppy, and brome grass.

Numerous bird species use the site, including mourning dove, pigeon, robin, scrubjay and house finch. Great blue heron and black-crowned night heron are known to frequent the site on occasion. Black-tailed jackrabbits and small rodents also have been sighted.

#### Cascade Canyon (Gordon Property)

The 57.3-acre Gordon Property is located on the south face of Cascade Canyon between Cascade Drive and the historic Mountain Home Inn (on Panoramic), and Edgewood Avenue North. The topography of the site is extremely varied, ranging from flatter areas on the ridgelines to steep narrow ravines. The upper portions of this property relate strongly to Mt. Tamalpais.

Redwood trees dominate the canyon floor and lower portions of northeast-facing slopes and ravines. Those in shallow ravines which extend up the mountain occur in dense stands of small trees with limited understory vegetation. In deeper, larger ravines, they are found with plants



typical of the redwood community, such as a shrub layer of California hazel, huckleberry, wood rose and thimbleberry, and a herbaceous ground cover of redwood sorrel, ginger and numerous wildflowers. Wax myrtle, western azalea, sword fern and the seasonally conspicuous aralia (elk clover) grow along the watercourses in this shaded canyon.

Broad-leaf evergreen forests are also found on the north and northeast facing portions of the property. Douglas fir is an occasional member of the plant community and canyon oak is occasionally present on particularly steep slopes, although both species become more prevalent on westerly slopes of the mountain. Small stands of oak woodland are scattered through the area on sunny shoulders of land and openings in the forest.

The biotic and topographic heterogeneity of the Gordon Property provides a diversity of habitats and niches for wildlife. The densely forested portions are frequented by deer for shelter, but small mammals such as raccoon, squirrel, chipmunk, mice and shrew make greater use of the habitat. Birds such as brown creeper, pygmy nuthatch, chestnut-backed chickadee, golden crowned kinglet, and varied thrush rely on the abundant insect populations. The moist soils and creeks are habitat of giant salamanders, newts, and other amphibians. Several owl species are important predators, feeding on small rodents and amphibians. Where the dense forest meets oak woodland and chaparral “edges”, it plays an important role for wildlife, particularly in summer, offering the equivalent moisture and moderate temperature of a riparian community. Continuity of the habitats on the Gordon Property with the larger Mt. Tamalpais wildlife environment is another significant feature of the property.

### Warner Ridge

Warner Ridge is a highly visible ridgeline which forms the boundary between Mill Valley and Corte Madera. The undeveloped areas consists of about 55 acres located above Scott Highlands. The vegetation mosaic includes small, grassy knolls, broom-covered slopes, ravines filled with blackberry and poison oak, patches of coast live oak and bay, impressive stands of madrone, and finally, chaparral extending to the head of the canyon and the ridges beyond. The mosaic reveals a successional trend toward broad-leaf evergreen, which already extends up most ravines, and the eventual disappearance of grasslands under a cover of both broom and coyote bush. Visually significant groups of madrone trees are located above Heather Way in Scott Highlands. The area contains an unusual mix of birds and mammals due to the unusual habitat diversity of the area.



## Northridge Area (Rider Property)

This highly-visible 17-acre property is located along the top of Blithedale Ridge. While the site's ridgetops are relatively level, a majority of the site consists of slopes in excess of 40 percent.

Vegetation consists of small areas of grassland near the top of Blithedale Ridge, which has been heavily invaded by broom, wooded areas and extensive landscaping around an existing single-family home. Redwoods dominate on northeast-facing slopes, and bays and coast live oaks are more common southwest exposures. Stands of madrone occur on exposed knolls. The only remaining grassland in Blithedale Canyon occurs at the southeast tip of Blithedale Ridge, where broom encroachment has been extensive.

Wildlife species are similar to those described for comparable plant communities and vegetation types on the remaining large undeveloped parcels. The continuity of habitats with the Mr. Tamalpais wildlife environment adds particular importance to the site.

### **2.8.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

#### **Intent**

It is the intent of these policies and programs to maintain and restore the natural resources--native vegetation and wildlife habitats--that existing within the developed portions of Mill Valley, and to protect and manage undeveloped areas with open space and conservation values. Available means of protection include acquisition in fee, limited acquisition (such as access easements or development rights), dedication in conjunction with development, or appropriate regulatory methods. Issues related to the management of the open space areas include techniques for vegetation management, appropriate access, and public education in support of natural resource protection.

These policies and programs are based on the recognition that the values of open space are numerous: protection of unique or valuable resources, such as habitats of endangered species, productive wetlands, or heritage trees; preservation of visual and scenic qualities; provision of passive recreation and public access, for example, to contiguous open space lands; visual separation of communities or neighborhoods; protection of stream corridors and other watershed functions; and prevention of inappropriate or potentially hazardous development, as with lands subject to slope failure or high fire potential. The specific values vary from one open space area to another.

While all open space lands are recognized as having general value to the community, their significance (and, thus, their priority for protection) varies depending on their specific qualities and the threat of loss through development. For example, some lands have regional as well as city-wide significance, some have more local community significance, and some are primarily significant to immediate neighborhoods. Some lands are protected from development through existing regulatory means (e.g. wetlands), and some present access problems or other major constraints to development which minimizes the immediate threat of loss.

It is the intent of these policies and programs, then, to provide guidance for the continuing management and restoration of existing and acquired natural resources and open space lands within the community, and to focus on the long-term protection of remaining undeveloped lands, viz. those remaining large undeveloped parcels that are candidates for some form of acquisition, dedication or regulation as open space. These policies are specifically intended to accomplish the following:

- To protect, where possible within the urbanized community of Mill Valley, the populations, stands (groves), and heritage specimens of native species. These species include coast live oak, redwood, and madrone, and the habitats for common and familiar wildlife that they support.
- To protect and restore the waters, marshlands and adjacent shoreline habitats of upper Richardson Bay. These constitute some of the most significant biotic and wildlife habitat resources of the area; they serve as major visual, recreational and educational resources and form a natural link to the Richardson Bay and San Francisco Bay ecosystem.
- To protect and restore the stream corridors and drainage network of the Mill Valley watershed, from their origins along the ridgelines, to the principal points of discharge in upper Richardson Bay.
- To create and enhance opportunities for enjoyment of scenic vistas of natural areas, including the Bay, Mt. Tamalpais, and riparian corridors.
- To maintain a diversity of vegetation types and wildlife habitats on the remaining open space lands, including keeping those grasslands free of brush encroachment, and protecting woodlands and chaparral.

- To minimize the hazards of natural and induced events, such as landslides and floods, by regulating development consistent with sound natural resource management and conservation policies.
- To accomplish these objectives and protect through acquisition in fee, or other means, the remaining undeveloped lands in accordance with their development potential and open space significance.
- Consistent with these objectives, to discourage intrusive or damaging access into sensitive habitats and, conversely, encourage appropriate access into open space lands and along the length of the streams, particularly within the downtown area..
- To recognize or create awareness of the value of the riparian resources in the community, and to protect and enhance these resources wherever possible. Riparian corridors should be better integrated into the community fabric, and where possible, sections of the stream channels now channeled through culverts should be reopened and restored to their natural conditions.

**Policy OS-1: The City shall encourage proper managment for the long-term protection and diversity of native vegetation and habitats, throughout the developed portions of the community as well as the undeveloped open space lands.**

**Program OS-1-1:** The City shall identify and map native plant species, populations, stands or occurrences that are determined to be of heritage, landmark or wildlife special habitat value, or other amenity to the community.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program OS-1-2:** The City shall develop guidelines for long-term management of species, vegetation types, and habitats identified as having special value to the community. The City shall determine whether these guidelines should be advisory or mandatory to residents on private lands that contain valuable resources and on publicly owned or otherwise unencumbered open space lands.

**Time Frame:** Following completion of Program OS-1-1.



**Program OS-1-3:** The City shall prepare a map of the riparian zones throughout the community. The extent of this zone shall be a minimum of 50 feet in each direction from the centerline of the creeks or streams in the developed areas (Catalpa, Sycamore and Cascade) and 100 feet in the undeveloped areas. The definition of riparian being “the terrestrial or emergent zone (as opposed to the submerged or aquatic zone) immediately adjacent to a fresh water stream or river”.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program OS-1-4:** The City shall prepare a Master Plan for the riparian areas of the City. This Master Plan should include a conveyance capacity analysis and management guidelines for maintaining and enhancing the riparian zone. Priority for riparian area restoration shall be given to the stream area between the upper ends of Old Mill Park, and Blithedale Park extending to the southern end of the area occupied by the existing lumber yard at the Millwood/Miller Avenue intersection. The conveyance capacity analysis will allow the City to determine the preferred stream bank protection techniques. The management guidelines should include provisions for litter removal in the riparian zone with yearly inspection schedules and fines imposed for the cost of removal by the City. The Riparian Zone Master Plan should also include public access and park development opportunities.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Policy OS-2: Permits shall be required for any stream bed or stream bank modification.**

**Program OS-2-1:** The City shall require environmental review and a permit for all stream bed or stream bank modifications and shall require revisions to the applications, and mitigation measures, to comply with the Flood Plain Management Ordinance, the Riparian Zone Master Plan, and the Environmental Review completed on the project.

**Time Frame:** As development proposals or applications for stream bed or stream bank modifications are reviewed by the City.

**Program OS-2-2:** The City shall identify and map degraded or damaged reaches of streams and target them for restoration or stabilization in conjunction with permits for new construction or alterations.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.



**Program OS-2-3:** The Planning Department and the Department of Public Works shall be responsible for preparing a Watershed Management Plan for the City. This Watershed Management Plan should include programs for erosion control.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Policy OS-3:** In view of the acknowledged regional values of the waters, marshes, and shoreline areas of Upper Richardson Bay, the City shall protect, and where appropriate, enhance the biological productivity and habitat of water-related vegetation and wildlife, endangered or otherwise distinctive or unique species, as well as the aesthetic amenities of the bayfront.

**Program OS-3-1:** The Parks and Recreation Department shall be responsible for preparing a marsh and wetland restoration plan for shoreline areas adjacent to Richardson Bay.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program OS-3-2:** The City shall limit intrusive access with buffers, fences, or appropriate signage along salt marsh edges. The City shall also encourage access to less-sensitive marsh areas.

**Time Frame:** As projects are reviewed and/or funding is available.

**Program OS-3-4:** The City shall undertake OA (Open Area) zoning of the following privately-owned wetland areas which are also precluded from development under State and Federal regulations.

- An area approximating the tidal portion of the 7.4 acre Goodman's Marsh property (30-260-35)
- The entire 3.6 acre Mulligan property located at the upper end of Richardson Bay (30-250-05)

**Time Frame:** Within nine months of Plan adoption.

**Policy OS-4:** Through a variety of mechanisms (public acquisition, dedication, or open space easements) the City will attempt to ensure the long term protection of all or portions of the remaining large undeveloped lands (Figure 2.10.)

**Program OS-4-1: Alto Hill.** The 34.42 acre Project H property (Assessor's Parcel Number 33-102-28) is open space of County-wide significance and due to its high visibility and community separator value is recommended for public acquisition. The upper portion of the 26.25 acre Cal-Fong property (33-102-12, 31, 37, 38, 39, 40) is recommended for preservation through a combination of development and dedication as discussed in Section 2.3.4.

**Program OS-4-2: Kite Hill.** Portions of the Silberberg (29-231-04, 08, 14), Gomez West (33-101-18) Khosropanah 930-021-06, 34) and Gomez East (33-101-17) properties are recommended for preservation through a combination of development and open space easements or dedication as discussed in Section 2.3.4. Because of their high visibility, both the 11.3 acre Sievert East (29-231-12 and 33-101-12) and Kostic/Hartman (30-021-47) properties have community-wide open space value and should be considered for public acquisition.

**Program OS-4-3: Warner Canyon.** Because of their value as an important part of the community separator between Mill Valley and Corte Madera and their proximity to existing public open space areas both the 52.89 acre Warner Ridge (29-320-06, 19, 20) and the 3.05 acre Werber (29-320-21, 22) properties are recommended for public acquisition.

**Program OS-4-4: Blithedale Canyon:** The 8.44 acre Smith property (27-031-03) is adjacent to other open space areas and is highly visible. It has neighborhood and community-wide open space significance and should be considered for public acquisition.

**Program OS-4-5: Cascade Canyon:** The important open space areas of the 58 acre Gordon Property (46-010-12, 22) are recommended for preservation through a combination of development and open space dedication and easements as discussed in Section 2.4.4. Because of their isolated locations and proximity to other open space parcels, the 11 acre Bank of America Trust (27-063-03; 27-064-01; 27-066-25, 29, 59) 9.86 acre Harney (46-031-16) and the 3.84 acre Jernberg (27-162-01) properties should be considered for public acquisition.

**Policy OS-5:** The City shall create and enhance opportunities for enjoyment of scenic views of natural areas such as the Bay, Mt. Tamalpais, and riparian corridors.

**Program OS5-1:** The City will prepare a plan for protecting and enhancing important scenic vistas. This plan should identify the locations which have the highest priority for vista protection and enhancement and contain specific guidelines for appropriate new plant material and the trimming or removal of trees, overhead utility lines or other objects which obstruct or detract from views.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.





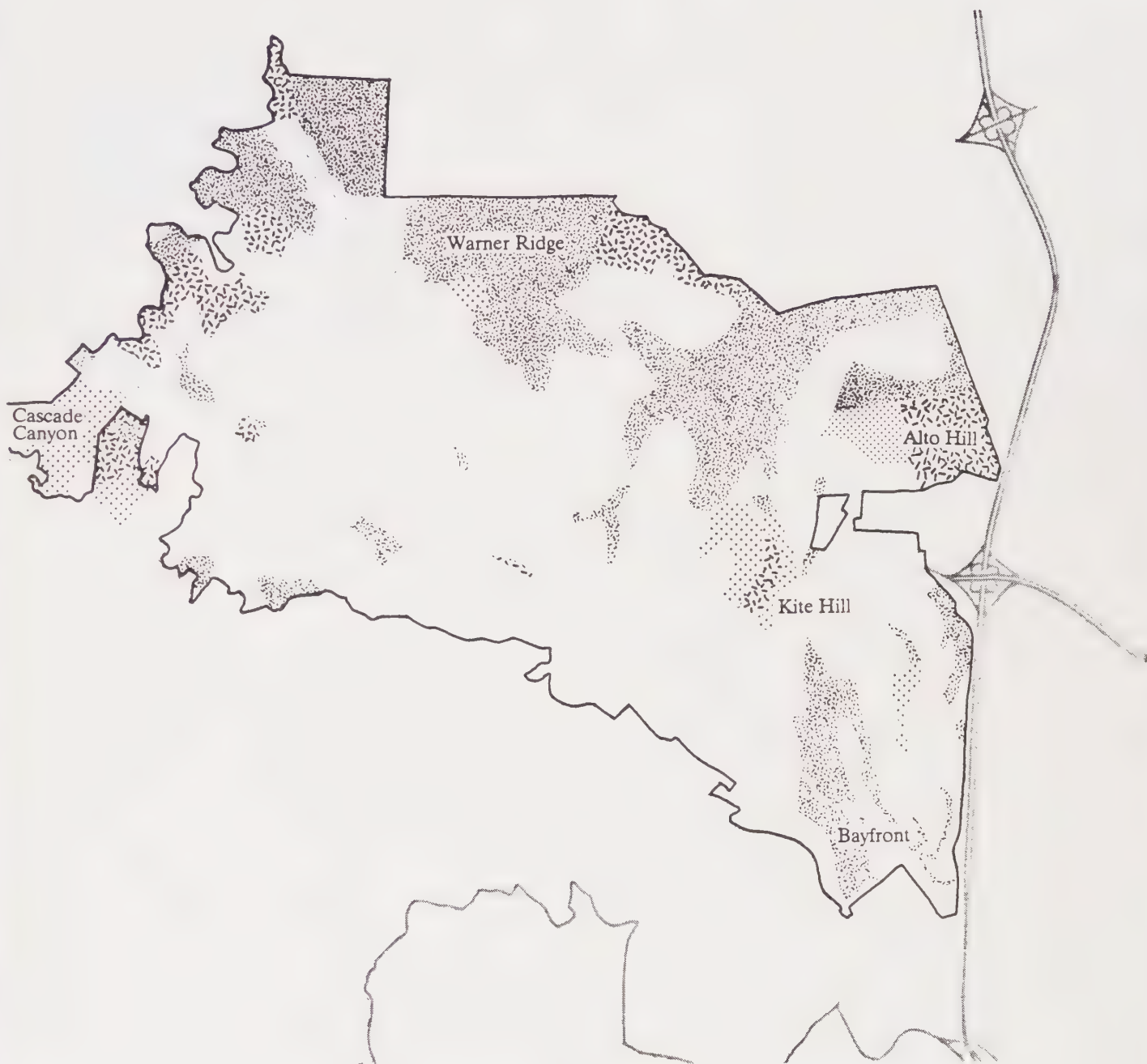
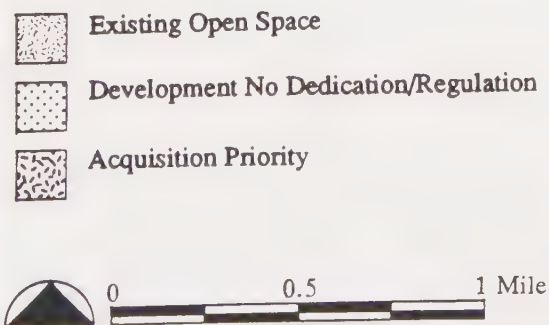


Figure 2.10

## Open Space

### Mill Valley General Plan

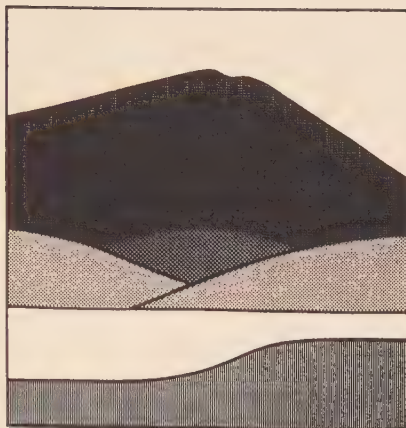
EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates





# HOUSING

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## 3. Housing

### 3.1 PURPOSE

This Housing section constitutes the mandatory Housing Element and provides a statement of Mill Valley's housing goals, objectives, policies and programs. It sets forth a framework to guide decision-making on housing issues and establishes an action plan to address the City's housing problems and needs. The housing goal described in the 1984 Housing Element remains essentially the same, that is: to preserve the City's character while providing for balanced residential growth, including a greater share of affordable housing than would be provided by market forces. This Housing Element contains revised policies and programs which respond to the current housing needs within the community.

Section 65583 of the California Government Code specifies that among the mandatory elements which must be included in a general plan is a Housing Element consisting of:

"An identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, qualified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. The Housing Element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobile homes, and shall make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community..."

Many housing needs can only be addressed on a comprehensive basis in concert with other concerns; infill development or mixed use incentives, for example, should consider land use, traffic, parking, design and other concerns as well. Amending the Housing Element when the rest of the General Plan was being updated, has resulted in a comprehensive policy document which is an internally consistent statement about the City's future.

## 3.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This part of the Housing Element provides a review of existing conditions and trends. As contrasted to Sections 3.4, HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, and 3.5, HOUSING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, which presents the City's policy direction, this section deals with the more detailed, technical aspects of defining the community's housing problems. Additional data on housing, population and other City characteristics is contained in the Appendices.

### 3.2.1 Profile of Mill Valley Housing and Population

Mill Valley and Marin County as a whole offer one of the more attractive residential environments in the Bay Area due to the natural beauty, desirable living environment and proximity to San Francisco. Many of the housing problems that exist today, such as low vacancy rates, escalating housing prices and rents, and the overall demand for housing and pressure for growth, are a result of these attractive qualities.

Mill Valley's housing conditions are reflective of many area-wide and even nation-wide trends. These trends will have far-reaching impacts on housing needs in the City. People are living longer, having fewer children and living in smaller households. There are more divorces, more single-parent households (especially those with a single mother) and more single-person households than ever before. In addition, housing costs have skyrocketed out of proportion to many people's ability to pay; and interest rates, construction costs and high land costs all increase the ultimate cost of housing.

There are limitations as to what the City can do about these problems due to the limited availability of developable land. At the anticipated rate of development, the City may be at 97% of total build-out by 1995. With the exception of some infill and mixed use sites, most other available residential sites are limited to small or steep sites with limitations due to access problems, soil stability, drainage, parking, etc.

The City of Mill Valley is part of the market area that makes up Marin County as a whole. Existing trends and future conditions countywide will affect housing prices and affordability in Mill Valley. The County has historically had the most expensive housing of all Bay Area Counties. In 1980, the median home price and the median rent in Marin were significantly higher than the Bay Area median home price and median rent. In fact,

Marin's home prices were 20 percent higher and rents were 10 percent higher than San Mateo County in 1980, which had the second highest home prices and rents in the Bay Area. By 1988, according to a report from the Bay Area Council, median rents in Marin were second only to San Francisco which at \$898, had the highest median rents in the region. The median Marin County rent of \$795 in 1988 was still considerably above the Bay Area median of \$730.

Between 1970 and 1988, the population in Mill Valley increased by only 3.4 percent, from 12,942 to 13,389. During that same period the number of housing units in the City increased by 29 percent, from 4,784 in 1970 to 6,172 in 1988. The average household size declined from 2.8 persons per household in 1970 to 2.3 persons per household in 1985 and 2.17 persons per household in 1988. Mill Valley's decline in part reflects the high percentage of multiple family units constructed during the past 15 years as well as a general lifestyle trend towards smaller households. As a proportion of Mill Valley's Planning Area, which also includes Almonte, Homestead Valley, Tamalpais Valley, and West Alto, the City comprised about 57 percent of the area's total population in 1980 (12,967 of the 22,688 total).

Mill Valley's 1980 population make-up included slightly fewer children and more elderly than the county as a whole. It is interesting to note that in the decade between 1970 and 1980, the number of children 18 years of age and under in the City decreased almost 27 percent, while the number of elderly over 65 years of age increased almost 23 percent. Countywide, the number of children decreased 23 percent and the number of elderly increased 29 percent. The median age in the City increased from 33.1 years of age in 1970 to 35.5 in 1980.

**1980 Age Distribution in Mill Valley  
and Marin County**

<u>Population</u>	<u>Mill Valley</u>	<u>Marin County</u>
Under 15	16.3%	17.4%
15-18	6.0%	6.4%
19-34	26.8%	29.0%
35-54	28.7%	27.4%
55-64	9.2%	9.9%
65+	13.0%	9.7%

SOURCE: 1980 U. S. Census

The gap between Mill Valley and Bay Area household incomes has continued to widen. In 1980, median household incomes in Mill Valley were 20 percent higher than the Bay Area as a whole and about the same as the county as a whole. Mill Valley's median household income was \$24,770 in 1980, compared to \$24,569 for Marin County and \$20,607 for the Bay Area. By 1985, the mean household income in Mill Valley was \$52,700 which was 8% above the County mean income of \$48,800 and 34% above the \$39,200 mean income for the Bay Area. In 1980, about 31 percent of the City's households would have been considered "low income", earning less than 80 percent of the Bay Area median income. The next table presents the 1980 income distribution for Mill Valley and Marin County households:

**1980 Household Income In Mill Valley  
and Marin County**

<u>Household Income</u>	<u>Mill Valley</u>	<u>Marin County</u>
Less than \$ 5,000	6.9%	6.9%
\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	9.7%	9.5%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	11.3%	11 6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	22.5%	22.8%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	31.0%	34.3%
\$50,000 or more	18.5%	14.8%

SOURCE: 1980 U. S. Census



**Comparison of 1985 Household Income for  
Selected Marin Cities and the Bay Area**

<u>City</u>	<u>Mean Income</u>
Tiburon	\$61,700
Larkspur	\$54,000
<b>Mill Valley</b>	<b>\$52,700</b>
Sausalito	\$52,100
Novato	\$46,100
San Rafael	\$45,800
San Anselmo	\$43,400
Fairfax	\$37,500
Marin County Total	\$48,800
Bay Area	\$39,200

SOURCE: Projections 87, A.B.A.G., 1987.

The following chart total shows the breakdown of households by income category in 1980:

**1980 Income Categories of Mill Valley Households**

<u>Very Low Income</u> (less than 50% of median):	17%
<u>Low Income</u> (50 - 80% of median):	14%
<u>Moderate Income</u> (80 - 120% of median):	18%
<u>Above Moderate</u> (120% or more of median):	51%

SOURCE: Housing Needs Determinations, A.B.A.G, 1988.

The occupations held by Mill Valley's working residents are consistent with high income households. In 1980, just under 50 percent of employed Mill Valley residents held professional, technical or managerial positions. Countywide, this figure was 40 percent. Conversely, less than 10 percent of the City's employed residents were factory operators, laborers, mechanics or repairmen.

There is evidence that housing turnover within the City has been quite high. In the 1970's, an annual average of 11.6 percent of Mill Valley's single-family homes, townhouses and condominiums were sold each year, by far the highest turnover rate in Marin. Although many of the same units may have been repeatedly sold over this period, this percentage appears too high to ignore the possibility of significant population shifts out of and into Mill Valley. In recent years, on the other hand, the turnover of rental units has been quite low. On average in 1980, Mill Valley renters and homeowners had lived at their present address longer than the countywide average. The following table summarizes the length of time Mill Valley homeowners and renters had lived in their units as of 1980:

#### Number of Years in Unit as of 1980

##### Households Owning Their Homes

<u>Number</u>		<u>Percent</u>
305	Less than 2 years	8.8
691	2 - 5 years	20.1
690	6 - 10 years	20.2
<u>1,750</u>	11 years or more	<u>50.9</u>
3,436		100%

##### Households Renting Their Units

<u>Number</u>		<u>Percent</u>
775	Less than 2 years	37.7
820	2 - 5 years	39.9
308	6 - 10 years	15.0
<u>154</u>	11 years or more	<u>7.4</u>
2,057		100%

SOURCE: 1980 U. S. Census

At the time of the 1980 census, Mill Valley's ethnic composition was 94.9 percent White, 1.0 percent Black, 2.8 percent Asian and Pacific Islanders, and 1.2 percent other groups. This breakdown was nearly identical with that reported in the 1970 Census, with very small increases in the number of Black and Asian residents, the only notable change.

The number of housing units in Mill Valley increased from 4,784 in 1970 to 6,172 in 1988. Between 1970 and 1988, the ratio of multi-family structures to single-family structures shifted toward multi-family. This change is largely the result of the construction of several large multi-family projects, the conversion of some single-family units to multi-family uses and, in a very few instances, the razing of single-family dwellings to make way for other residential and non-residential uses. However, as shown below, even with this new multi-family development, there still is a slightly higher proportion of single-family dwellings in Mill Valley compared to the County as a whole.

1970-1988 Mill Valley and Marin County Housing Structure Types				
	<u>1970</u>		<u>1988</u>	
	<u>Mill Valley</u>	<u>Marin County</u>	<u>Mill Valley</u>	<u>Marin County</u>
Single-family	81.5%	72.4%	69%	66.9%
Multi-family	18.5%	27.6%	31%	33.1%

SOURCE: 1970 U. S. Census; State Department of  
Finance (1988)

Most of the units built in Mill Valley between 1970 and 1980 were either very large (6 or more rooms) or small (3 or less rooms). Very large units comprised 51 percent of the units added and small units comprised 31 percent of the units added. Mill Valley's median unit size increased from 5.2 to 5.3 rooms per unit between 1970 and 1980. The 1980

County median was 5.2 rooms per unit. Compared to the County in 1980, Mill Valley had a slightly higher proportion of units with two or less bedrooms, as shown below:

#### **Bedrooms Per Unit - 1980**

<u>Number of Bedrooms</u>	<u>Mill Valley</u>	<u>Marin County</u>
None and 1	20.2%	17.7%
2	32.7%	30.9%
3 or more	47.0%	51.4%

SOURCE: 1980 U. S. Census

Owner-occupants comprise the largest proportion of Mill Valley's residents. In 1980, Mill Valley's owner-occupancy percentage was 63 percent of all occupied units. For the County as a whole it was 60 percent. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of occupied units in Mill Valley increased by 838 units. Over this ten-year period, the number of owner-occupied units increased by 258 and the number of renter-occupied units increased by 580. In total, in 1980, there were 3,435 owner-occupied units and 2,058 renter-occupied units. Almost 20 percent of the occupied single-family homes were rented in 1980, compared to 18 percent in 1970. The conversion of apartment units to condominiums slightly reduced the supply of rental housing. A total of 119 apartment units were converted to condominiums between 1970 and 1977. No new condominium conversions have occurred since 1977.

The vacancy rate is an important factor in determining the condition of the housing market. A vacancy rate of 5 percent is generally considered "healthy." Mill Valley has always been a desirable place to live, and has historically had a low vacancy rate. In 1970 the vacancy rate was 2.8 percent. In 1980 it was 2.5 percent, which was also the 1984 vacancy rate for Mill Valley estimated by the State Department of Finance. The 1988 State Department of Finance Vacancy Rate Estimate for Mill Valley was 2.71%. Estimated 1988 vacancy rates for selected Marin cities are shown below:



**Comparison of 1988 Vacancy Rates for  
Selected Marin Cities**

<u>City</u>	<u>Percent Vacant</u>
San Rafael	1.10%
Novato	1.83%
Larkspur	1.86%
San Anselmo	2.41%
<b>Mill Valley</b>	<b>2.71%</b>
Sausalito	2.96%
Tiburon	4.31%
Fairfax	4.57%
Marin County Total	3.18%

SOURCE: State Department of Finance (1988)

When there is a low vacancy rate, housing tends to become overcrowded. However, in Mill Valley in 1980, less than 2 percent of the units were considered overcrowded (more than 1.0 persons per room). About three-fourths of the overcrowded units (there were 69 altogether) were renter-occupied.

Mill Valley is one of the oldest communities in Marin and consequently has a high percentage of older housing. The table below shows the age of the City's housing stock:

**1980 Age of Housing Stock in Mill Valley**

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number of Units</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under 10	968	17.2%
10-20	977	17.3%
21-30	1,296	23.0%
31-40	843	15.0%
Over 40	<u>1,552</u>	<u>27.5%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,636</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: 1980 U. S. Census

### 3.2.2 Status of Existing Programs

The purpose of this section is to describe the status of existing development programs which the City of Mill Valley has implemented to provide more lower priced housing. Mill Valley has utilized a large number of techniques to create and preserve affordable housing, including a strong inclusionary policy and a wide range of subsidized housing production and household assistance programs. The City's record of achievement is one of the best in Marin County. In addition, Mill Valley is the most populous of the communities in southern Marin and has designated a large proportion of its land for residential use. The programs discussed below should be viewed in light of the current housing market, limited remaining undeveloped land, and the decreasing availability of state and federal funding programs.

**General Development Trends:** A summary of development trends within the community is as follows:

1. **DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 1970 AND 1984:** A total of 1,017 housing units were added to the housing stock between 1970 and 1984; an average of about 85 units per year. The units added included 228 single-family units (22%) and 789 multiple-family units (78%). Between 1970 and 1980 there were 258 owner-occupied units added (31%) and 580 renter-occupied units added (69%). There were 4,784 units in Mill Valley in 1970; 5,653 in 1980; and 5,759 in 1984.
2. **DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 1984 AND 1988:** Approximately 413 additional units were added to the housing stock between 1984 and 1988, an average of about 103 units per year. This construction increased the total number of housing units as of January 1, 1988 to approximately 6,172. The new construction included:

Corinthian Villas (Sunrise Pointe) (66 multiple-family units)

Scott Valley Meadows (39 single-family units)

Eucalyptus Knoll (79 multiple-family units)

Mill Creek Meadows (60 multiple-family units)

Old Mill Creek (6 multiple-family units)

Pickleweed (32 B.M.R. multiple-family units)

Portsmouth Square (26 multiple-family units)

105 additional infill single-family, second unit, and multiple-family units

3. **ADDITIONAL UNITS TO ULTIMATE BUILD-OUT:** The projections for ultimate build-out contained in the Land Use section would add up to 390 additional units to the City's housing stock. The type and geographical distribution of these new units are indicated on **Table 2.1** in the **Land Use** section.
4. **UNITS AT TOTAL BUILD-OUT:** Under the build-out projections contained in the Land Use section, the total number of housing units within the City is estimated to increase to 6,562 units which represents an approximate 6% increase over the existing number of units within the community.

The unincorporated portion of the Mill Valley Planning Area, which includes Almonte, Homestead Valley, Tamalpais Valley and Alto, comprised about 43 percent of the area's housing units in 1980 (4,236 units). According to the Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan, there is an estimated development potential build-out of roughly 984 additional units in the unincorporated portion of the Planning Area. When combined with the City's development capacity, the entire Planning Area has a build-out potential of 1,374 units. This is significantly more housing than required to meet the ABAG Regional Housing Need Determinations, which are discussed in Section 3.3.

**Inclusionary Housing:** Mill Valley's 1975 Housing Element required that new housing developments should make available 20 percent of the units at prices or rents affordable to low income households and 35 percent of new units at prices affordable to moderate income households as a matter of policy. These inclusionary standards were to be applied only when adequate government subsidies were available.

The City adopted the above requirement in 1975 when cost and financing considerations were not impacting the economics of affordable housing production as severely as at

present. Soon after the adoption of this policy, a local moratorium on water hookups served to postpone most proposed projects. By the time development was again free to proceed (in 1978), changes in the economics of housing production had made the original policy unrealistic.

The 1981 Housing Element updated the 1975 policy to make it more economically realistic. The new policy required projects over 10 units to provide 10 percent moderate income units (if the project was less than 7 units per acre) or 15 percent moderate income units (if the project was over 7 units per acre). The new policy also included provisions for density bonuses and "in-lieu" fees. This inclusionary policy was implemented through City adoption of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance in 1985. The following chart shows the affordable units required through 1988:

**Inclusionary Units in Mill Valley**  
(Moderate Income Condominiums)

<u>Project</u>	<u>No. Units</u>	<u>Subsidy Source</u>
Ashford Court	8	Internal Subsidy
Eucalyptus Knoll	11	Internal Subsidy
Corinthian Villas (Sunrise Pointe)	6	Internal Subsidy
Brabo (Portsmouth Square)	4 <sup>*</sup>	Project Sponsor
Scott Valley Meadows	<u>4<sup>**</sup></u>	Project Sponsor
Total Inclusionary Units Actually Sold:	25	
* The City accepted in-lieu fee after no moderate income households wished to purchase the small units.		
** The City accepted a \$450,000 in-lieu fee which was used for the Pickleweed below market rate family rental project.		

Between 1975 and 1988, the City required a total of 33 moderate income inclusionary units. Twenty-five units were actually sold to moderate income households and in-lieu



housing fees were paid for the remaining 8 units. In 1988, the City inclusionary ordinance was revised to apply to any residential project of two or more lots or parcels and to emphasize the collection of in-lieu fees. The City intends to use the in-lieu fees to provide part of the subsidy required for a planned, City-sponsored, 30-unit BMR family rental housing project on a school site or sites.

**Subsidized Rental Housing Developments:** Four publicly owned and/or publicly subsidized projects located within the City of Mill Valley currently provide 191 low- and moderate-income rental units. Subsidy mechanisms include below market rate permanent financing and operating subsidies for Shelter Hill (HUD Section 236) and 260 Camino Alto (HUD Section 8) and tax-exempt Certificate of Participation financing for Pickleweed. The City still has an additional 136 units authorized under the Article 34 referendum after developing the 32 low and moderate income rental units at Pickleweed. The following chart also shows the subsidized rental units available in 1988 through the rental assistance programs discussed in the next section:

#### Subsidized Rental Units in Mill Valley - 1988

<u>Project:</u>		
Shelter Hill (family)	75	HUD Section 236
The Redwoods (elderly)	60	HUD Section 101 Rent Supplement and Section 231 Mortgage Insurance
EAH 260 Camino Alto (handicapped)	24	HUD Section 202/8 (CDBG
Pickleweed (family)	32	(San Francisco Foundation (In-lieu fees
Total Units:	<u>191</u>	
<u>Non-Project:</u>		
	31	HUD Section 8
	9*	Rebate for Marin Renters
	1	Project Independence
	<u>7</u>	HUD Voucher Program
Total Units:	48*	

\* With money available to assist approximately 7 more households.

**Pickleweed Apartments:** The City's Pickleweed low and moderate income family rental development is located across Miller Avenue from Tam High School. The project includes 8 one-bedroom, 15 two-bedroom, and 8 three-bedroom units and was completed in early August 1986. The Pickleweed site was first designated for affordable housing back in 1978 as part of a larger 92-unit planned development. However, the developer of that project was unable to secure financing for the 32-unit below-market rate portion of the condominium project. As a result, the site for the below-market units remained vacant for many years while various parties attempted to assemble a financial package.

In 1984, using approximately \$225,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds and part of the \$450,000 paid by a local developer in lieu of including four below market housing units in the Scott Valley Meadows project, the City purchased the Pickleweed site. After detailed analysis of various financing and development options for the property, the City decided to contract with BRIDGE Housing Corporation, a non-profit housing development agency, to serve as a co-developer and project manager.

Working closely together, the City and BRIDGE oversaw the redesign of the project, such that it retained the basic concept while improving the appearance of the earlier plans, yet was much less expensive to construct. This redesign effort resulted in a cost reduction of over \$500,000 below the estimates for the prior plans.

The next step in the process was to assemble a workable financial package for the development. The City designated the remainder of the in-lieu fees from the Scott Valley Meadows project to Pickleweed. In addition, the San Francisco Foundation granted approximately \$540,000 of Buck Trust funds to the project. BRIDGE and the City then worked with a local bank to obtain the additional financing needed to complete the project. With a revised design and financing package in hand, a general contractor was hired and construction of the apartments began in early 1986.

As the project neared completion, over two hundred completed rental applications were received from prospective residents. From this list, the tenants for the 32 units were selected. Top priority was given to City and Mill Valley School District employees, followed by people who currently reside or work in Mill Valley. These priorities for selection were the same as used for other affordable housing projects.

Base rents for the units were initially set at \$495 for a one-bedroom, \$595 for a two-bedroom, and \$750 for a three-bedroom. However, most of the tenants actually paid less than these base amounts as they received some form of additional rental assistance from one of three sources. Some of the tenants have Section 8 certificates. In addition, the Rebate for Marin Renters program also assists several of Pickleweed's residents. Finally, the project also has a small rental assistance fund which provided additional rental reductions for a few of the units.

The long-term affordability of the project is ensured by the City's ownership of the land, which is leased to BRIDGE. The lease requires that the rent levels on all units remain affordable. Eventually, the City hopes to assume ownership of the improvements.

The City and BRIDGE's efforts have resulted in a unique and successful affordable housing development which was recognized with a Pacific Coast Builders 1987 Gold Nugget Merit Award and the Urban Land Institute's 1988 Award for Excellence as the "Best Small Scale Residential Development". The project should provide a model for the next project of this kind which the City hopes to build on a vacant school site.

#### Description of Pickleweed Residents in 1988

Couples with children:	6
Couples without children:	3
Singles without children:	4
Seniors:	2
Single mothers with children:	15
Single fathers with children:	<u>2</u>
	32 units
Total number of children:	34
Handicapped in wheelchairs:	2
Other disabled:	3
Income levels:	

60% "Low Income" (less than 80% median)

40% lower half of "Moderate Income" (80% to 100% median)

**Rental Assistance Programs:** Several programs are used in Mill Valley to reduce the rents low-income households have to pay. In The Redwoods, 60 low-income elderly residents are receiving financial assistance through HUD's seldom used Section 101 Rent Supplement program.

Distributed throughout the City in 1988 were 31 very low-income households which received benefits through the HUD Section 8 Existing Housing program. This program, administered by the Housing Authority, provides a cash payment to landlords who rent to qualified low-income families, with the tenants paying up to 30 percent of their income on rent. In 1988, there were also 7 Mill Valley households receiving assistance through the HUD voucher program.

In addition, the Housing Authority administers a rental assistance program called Project Independence, which is a state funded after-care program analogous to Section 8. Renters must be referred by a participating agency. In 1988, there were 37 units funded countywide, with 1 unit located in Mill Valley.

Between 1981 and 1988, the City committed \$49,500 to the Rebate for Marin Renters (RMR) program from the City General Fund. The local funds were originally matched by San Francisco Foundation funds and now Marin Foundation funds two for one. Additional non-matching funds, brought the total amount available for Mill Valley to over \$150,000. In 1988, 9 families were being assisted and money was available to assist 7 more, with the average annual assistance under the program being \$1,500 per family. Of the nine households being assisted, 2 were elderly, 2 were disabled, 4 were families and 1 was in shared housing.

The RMR and Section 8 programs have been very successful in providing housing for lower income residents, or those earning less than 80 percent of median income. In fact, the programs complement each other very effectively. The RMR program provides a subsidy to renters for one-year at a time based on the difference between 25 percent of their income and the rent they pay, up to the maximum rents established for the program. The maximum rents are 20 percent higher than the "fair market rent" established for the Section 8 program. Thus, lower income households are provided a subsidy while they wait for available Section 8 assistance or an increase in their earnings. The program has been particularly successful in meeting housing needs of single-parents.



**Condominium Conversion Controls:** Mill Valley passed an ordinance in April of 1977 which set strict standards governing condominium conversions. In addition to establishing construction standards for condominiums, the ordinance required that conversions must meet the inclusionary goals of the Housing Element, and that the City must find that the conversion does not affect the provision of rental housing in the community.

The City adopted revisions to the condominium conversion ordinance in 1982 to require 15 percent of all units in projects of ten or more units to be sold or rented at prices affordable to low-income households and 10 percent for moderate income households. In addition, low-income elderly or handicapped tenants must be awarded lifetime leases.

The City has approved only two condominium conversions. One of these condominium conversions was the 107-unit Shelter Bay Condominiums, originally built in the County as apartments. The second project was an eight-unit development on Catalpa, originally built as apartments meeting condominium standards. No applications for condominium conversions have been received by the City since 1977.

**Second Units:** The City adopted an ordinance establishing procedures for legalizing existing second units and permitting development of new second units in May, 1983. In Mill Valley, second units probably constitute a larger portion of the total housing stock than in any other Marin city and Mill Valley is one of the few jurisdictions in the County which has attempted to realistically address the issue of legalizing existing second units. In 1988, there were approximately 400 second units in Mill Valley. This represents approximately 6.4% of the total housing stock. Through the end of 1988, 35 new second units (an average of 6.4 units per year) were approved through the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process and 41 existing units (an average of 7.5 units per year) were legalized. In addition, the City has identified 71 legal non-conforming units which have existed and have been rented continuously since 1950 and 249 apparent second units which were illegally constructed or converted. The following tables indicate the status of second units in 1988 and the number approved each year since the second unit ordinance was adopted in May, 1983.

### Status of Second Units - 1988

	<u>Number of Units</u>	<u>Average Per Year</u>
New (C.U.P.)	35 units	6.4 units
Legalized (C.U.P.)	41 units	7.5 units
Legal Nonconforming	71 units	
Illegal	<u>248</u> units	
Total	395 units	

### Approved Second Unit Conditional Use Permits

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>Total</u>
New:	6	10	6	10	1	2	35
Legalized:	<u>6</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>41</u>
Total:	12	30	13	12	3	6	76 units

**Mixed Use Areas:** The City has encouraged mixed use development in appropriate areas along major thoroughfares as a means of providing housing diversity and providing opportunities for residential growth. There are two types of residential-commercial areas. The first is commercial areas where residential uses are conditionally permitted, and the second is residential areas within which office or commercial uses are conditionally permitted.

Along Lower Miller Avenue from a point just west of Willow Street to Lytton Square, the recent City policy has been that residential use should continue to be the dominant use with the approval of new office buildings or the conversion of existing residential buildings to office use severely limited. In this area, residential densities are limited to one unit for each 3,500 square feet of site area and a maximum site coverage including enclosed or covered parking, equal to 50 percent of the site area.

Within the Lytton Square/Town Center area and the commercial areas along East Blithedale, multiple residential uses have been encouraged. Within all commercial areas, the allowable number of residential units is currently governed by the City parking standards and other zoning provisions of the respective commercial areas.

**Support for Multi-Family Infill Development:** The City has encouraged small-scale multi-family infill development adjacent to the downtown where the new development minimizes impacts on and is compatible with the existing neighborhoods in order to provide a housing alternative to the single-family residential designation of most of the rest of the City. Typical "in-fill" projects adjacent to the downtown include: (1) 72 Lovell (4 condominium units); (2) 30 Buena Vista (3 rentals); (3) 263 Miller (4 condominium units); (4) 267 Miller Avenue (2 condominium units); (5) 201-205 Miller (2 condominium units); (6) 65 Lovell Avenue (4 condominium units), (7) 250 Miller Avenue (4 condominium units), and (8) 42 Miller (6 condominium units).

**Rehabilitation Loan Programs:** The Marin County Housing Authority administers the Rehabilitation Loan Subsidy Program. Community Development Block Grant funds for rehabilitation loans have decreased significantly. The amount available for countywide use was \$491,600 in 1980-81; \$454,700 in 1981-82; \$284,000 in 1982-83; and \$296,000 in 1983-84. This represents a 40 percent decrease over the four-year period. Through November, 1983, a total of 171 loans were funded countywide for a total loan amount of \$2,140,056. There have been 13 loans funded in Mill Valley for a total loan amount of \$160,850 (an average of \$12,370 per loan). This represents about 12 percent of the total loans made countywide, which is a high proportion.

The Housing Authority also administers the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program, which provides a rehabilitation subsidy to owners of rental units. Through September, 1983 there were 30 units rehabilitated countywide under the program, with none of those units located in Mill Valley.

**Presale Inspections:** The City inspects all residential units that are sold. The inspections mainly cover health and safety concerns. However, they also provide a good source of information about the condition of the housing stock and the turnover rate. It should be noted that some of these inspections can be for the same unit if it has been resold during this time period. The number of inspections conducted each year between 1981 and 1987 is as follows:

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
Number of Inspections:	172	131	214	231	267	341	243
Percent of Housing Stock	3%	2.2%	3.7%	4.0%	4.5%	5.6%	3.9%

**Manufactured Housing:** As required by State law, the City adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance in 1982 to allow the installation of manufactured housing on permanent foundations subject to the same zoning regulations which apply to site built housing. To date, there have been no proposals received by the City for manufactured housing and, because of current land costs, few, if any, are likely.

### 3.2.3. Housing Constraints

Environmental constraints, economic conditions, limitations on utility connections, and government policies all affect housing affordability. This section analyzes available lands and market and regulatory constraints to assess how their impact effects the amount, cost and type of housing that may be built in Mill Valley.

## MARKET CONSTRAINTS

**Land Availability:** The largest remaining undeveloped areas within the City are located in the Alto Hill area in the northeastern corner of the City, the Shelter Ridge area above the Public Safety Building and the Kite Hill area at the intersection of East Blithedale and Camino Alto. Although the North Ridge area and areas above Cascade Canyon contain significant, undeveloped acreage, geotechnical, access, environmental and public safety (fire protection) considerations make them appropriate only for very low density development. As a result, there are only limited opportunities remaining in Mill Valley to develop new housing. **Table 2.1** in the **Land Use** section indicates the type and locational distribution of potential new residential development.



**Cost of Land:** High land costs will continue to be a critical factor limiting the development of affordable housing in Mill Valley. The full cost of land includes the raw land purchase price, land financing costs and subdivision approval costs.

Total developable lot costs vary in relation to locational amenities and allowable lot sizes. Although substantial portions of Mill Valley are zoned RS-6, which allows the development of single family homes on lots as small as 6,000 square feet, these areas are almost entirely built out. Most large, undeveloped parcels suitable for single family development can only be developed at much lower densities because of severe environmental constraints.

Land costs per square foot increase as allowable densities increase. However, the increase in land costs is rarely proportional to the greater permitted density. For this reason land costs per unit tend to be lower for multi-family residential construction than for single family homes. Land costs, as a percentage of development costs, have risen considerably in the past few years. In part this trend is a product of the fact that land prices reflect housing demand more directly than any other cost component. Concurrent increases in interest rates, development fees, and average approval periods have increased land holding costs as well.

**Construction Costs:** The costs of constructing wood frame housing have risen significantly in recent years. The typical cost to build an "average" wood frame single family detached home were about \$90 per square foot in 1988. However, total construction costs can be considerably higher for a luxury home. Construction costs, excluding land, site costs and developer profits may range between \$75,000 for a modest 1,000 square foot unit to over \$600,000 for a 4,000 square foot luxury home.

An additional factor in Marin has been the perception of high profit in residential development, which has resulted in higher labor and subcontracting costs in the County. Moreover, these higher costs are difficult to reduce to accommodate less profitable types of development such as low and moderate income housing. A report from the Marin Property Owners Association indicated that labor costs are 10 to 15 percent lower in Sonoma County. While labor union contracts are the same in the two counties, the lower cost results from the fact that there is flat buildable land in Sonoma County so workers can get the job done faster.

**Financing:** Interest rates have also played a critical role in making housing unaffordable. High land and construction financing costs have made the housing development business inherently more risky. Developers in turn need to realize high financial returns to justify the risks. Higher required profits as well as costs push up eventual sales prices.

Second mortgages to finance home maintenance and improvements are more costly than first mortgages. Such financing costs make rehabilitation loans infeasible for less affluent property owners. Therefore, rehabilitation must be funded with savings, deferred or through government subsidy.

**Market Demand:** Average home prices are one measure of market demand. As indicated previously, home prices in Marin are considerably above those for the Bay Area and Mill Valley prices are above the Marin County average. The attached table compares the \$412,855 average sales price of the homes sold in Mill Valley in October, 1988, with the average in other Marin cities. During this month, the Mill Valley average sales price was 30% higher than the 1988 Marin County average of \$318,088 and 225% higher than the 1978 Mill Valley average of \$127,935.

**Comparison of Home Sales for Various  
Marin Cities - October 1988**

<u>City</u>	<u># of Sales</u>	Single-Family		Condominiums	
		<u>Average Price</u>	<u>% of Marin Average</u>	<u># of Sales</u>	<u>Average Price</u>
Belvedere	1	\$760,000	239%	0	\$ 0
Tiburon	9	558,133	175%	3	237,427
Ross	7	505,470	159%	0	0
Sausalito	6	464,000	146%	11	231,364
<b>Mill Valley</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>412,855</b>	<b>130%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>194,064</b>
Larkspur	8	358,438	113%	6	140,833
Unincorporated	99	347,696	109%	11	194,191
Corte Madera	17	301,765	98%	8	195,112
San Rafael	58	287,969	91%	30	158,404
San Anselmo	24	270,831	85%	2	159,312
Fairfax	8	222,625	70%	1	145,000
Novato	<u>54</u>	<u>222,464</u>	<u>70%</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>130,236</u>
Marin Total	302	\$318,088	100%	121	\$167,687

SOURCE: Marin County Assessor-Recorder

## GOVERNMENT CONSTRAINTS

**Land Use Controls:** Zoning and land use designations in Mill Valley are largely determined by the City's goals that:

- The health and well being of people and physical safety of property should be assured.
- The natural environment should be protected and should visually dominate the character of Mill Valley.
- New development should be compatible with Mill Valley's small-town character.

To implement these goals, Mill Valley has zoned major portions of its undeveloped hillside areas at very low densities. The City has also zoned certain areas in the hillsides as permanent open space after public acquisition or as a result of dedication from private interests. Community design objectives, as they relate to undeveloped hillside areas, often coincide with environmental constraints to development identified in other sections of the General Plan. Large scale development of the City's remaining undeveloped parcels would strain the traffic capacity of Mill Valley's arterials: East Blithedale, Camino Alto, and Miller Avenue.

The Blithedale Ridge and areas above Warner Canyon (190 acres) are now in open space as part of the Rider property purchase. In addition, portions of Cascade and Fern Canyons may be developable at low densities, but are also recommended for acquisition for open space in the Land Use section.

The City has adopted an objective of protecting its existing residential neighborhoods. With the exception of portions of East Mill Valley, the City has developed into single-family residential neighborhoods, a pattern reinforced by schools, parks and streets with extremely limited traffic capacity. These residential neighborhoods provide a lifestyle and housing stock which are among Mill Valley's major assets. Policies have therefore been adopted which guarantee that new development in established neighborhoods will be compatible with existing neighborhood character; and development adjacent to established neighborhoods will not generate significant levels of traffic through these neighborhoods.

**Development Standards:** Mill Valley has traditionally encouraged high architectural standards for new development. Current City zoning regulations require Design Review approval for any proposed new single-family homes as well as any additions to or new multi-family developments. Most of the remaining developable sites have significant design or environmental constraints, which require extensive review and analysis by the City.

**Costs of the Local Permit Process:** Costs associated with the permit process may act as a constraint to the development of affordable housing. Line item permit costs are related to processing inspection and installation services. They are limited by California law to the cost to the various agencies of performing these services. Total fees in 1984 ranged between \$4,688 and \$5,677 per unit. In 1988, the total fees for a now typical 3,000 sq. ft. single-family home and 1,000 sq. ft. condominium ranged between



approximately \$17,500 and \$19,500 per unit including school impact fees of \$1.53 per square foot, sewer connection fees of \$5,000, and water connection fees of \$3,500.

Permit costs can vary substantially from site to site depending on site conditions, location and the type and design of development. Much of the remaining developable land is subject to moderate to severe public health and safety constraints, such as steep slopes, underlying bay muds, drainage problems and fire risk. Detailed soils reports, engineering and design studies and associated permits will be required. Many of the remaining developable parcels in Mill Valley are smaller in-fill sites within developed areas which are only suitable for single family residential units. Because many of these sites were originally subdivided into lot sizes that are inconsistent with current zoning regulations, variances may be required.

Permit fee and cost estimates for two now typical types of residential development: a typical single family home (3,000 square feet) and an infill condominium (one of four 1,000 square foot units) are as follows:

#### Estimated Permit Costs - 1988

<u>Mill Valley Permit Costs</u>	<u>Single Family</u> (\$255,000 to construct)	<u>Condominium</u> (\$75,000 to construct)
Building Permit	\$1,182.50	527.50
Plan Check Fees	769.00	343.00
Microfilm Fee (min)	5.00	5.00
Planning & Development Tax	525.00(3 BR)	375.00(2 BR)
Fire Dept. Plan Check	25.00	25.00
Drainage Fees	80-680.00	80-680.00
Master Plan	-----	240.00
Design Review	650.00	200.00
Negative Declaration	250.00	67.50
Tentative Map	-----	125.00
In-Lieu Housing Fee	-----	1,136.00
In-Lieu Park Fee	-----	<u>4,714.25*</u>
Subtotal:	\$3,486.50 - \$4,086.50	\$7,837.75 - \$8,437.75

<u>Other Fees and Costs</u>		
State Conservation Tax	17.85	4.85
Sewer Connection	5,000.00	5,000.00
Water Installation	1,000.00	1,000.00
Connection Fee to MMWD	3,500.00	3,500.00
School Impact Fee (at \$1.53 sq. ft.)	4,590.00	1,530.00
Subtotal:	\$14,107.85	\$11,045.00
Total Fees & Costs	\$17,594.35-\$18,194.50	\$18,882.75 - \$19,482.75
Cost Per Sq. Ft.:	\$5.86 - \$6.06	\$18.88 - \$19.48

\*

Using per unit fee charged for 4-unit condominium project at 65 Lovell Avenue.

Costs associated with the time it takes to go through development review and building permit processing can be even more significant. These costs are highly variable and are related to developer overhead, financing and start-up costs, as well as the length of the development review and permit processing period. It has been estimated that the cost of processing increases construction costs an average of 18 percent per year.

Single-family housing development applications generally take less time to review than multi-family proposals. When proposed single family developments are in conformity with the General Plan and existing zoning, it is possible to process the required applications within several months. New single- and multi-family development proposals are now both subject to Design Review. Major projects may also require EIR's, multiple public hearings and extensive local review. The total review time for multi-family projects, from the initial developer contact with the City to final approval, can take up to a year.

By encouraging developers to meet with neighborhood residents and allowing the combined processing of certain applications, such as Master Plans and Tentative Maps, the City has taken actions which reduce processing time and potential delay for residential projects. However, much of the remaining developable land in the City has significant environmental and land development constraints, such as access problems,

visual prominence, steep slopes and geological problems, which require extensive review and analysis of proposed projects to assure appropriate site planning and design.

Another option which the City has to reduce the City fees on higher density projects would be to change the current "in-lieu" park fee standard, which is based on the fair market value of the property, to a more equitable fee. The current fee structure may result in higher density projects paying significantly more on a per unit basis than lower density projects, because of the higher value of the property. This current fee structure may be a constraint to the development of affordable housing at higher densities and in appropriate locations, such as near downtown.

**Federal Policy Constraints:** Federal Policy affects the development of housing and most directly impacts the development of low income housing. The usefulness of Federal subsidy programs is limited by the amount of funding available. Federal policy for housing has changed from new construction programs to a greater emphasis on subsidies for existing housing. With the exception of the Section 202 (elderly and handicapped) Program, Federal money for new construction is very limited.

**Utility Constraints:** As indicated in the Public Services and Facilities section, in early April, 1989, when their total water commitments reached 34,900 acre feet per year, the Marin Municipal Water District imposed a moratorium on water connections for all new residential and commercial developments. This moratorium will remain in place until the Water District obtains an additional long-term water source. The Water District is currently evaluating various options for obtaining up to 14,000 acre feet per year of additional water capacity to serve future development. Obtaining this new long-term supply may take as long as five years.

Small amounts of water may be released during the moratorium as developments with water commitments don't proceed or water is made available through reclamation projects. 100 acre feet per year (equivalent to approximately 300 single family homes) has also been set aside for "public service" projects including City and non-profit sponsored below market rate housing. Construction of those residential projects which did not obtain water commitments before the moratorium went into effect and do not obtain water released during the moratorium, may have to wait up to five years. In addition, because of the continued high demand for housing in Mill Valley and Southern Marin, the Water District moratorium will probably also tend to increase both the rate at which existing housing appreciates in value and the recent trend toward tearing down existing single family homes to obtain a lot (and a water meter) for the construction of new housing.

### 3.3 EXISTING AND FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

The discussion in this section is more analytical in nature compared to the previous section because it is intended to provide a synthesis of the data and a basis for formulating the City's housing goal, objectives, policies and programs which are presented in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the Housing Element.

#### 3.3.1 Future Growth

Between 1980 and the year 1995, Marin County's population is projected to increase by only 8.5 percent, to 241,700, with most of the growth occurring in the Novato area. The increase in population, increase in local jobs and a continuing decline in the average household size will continue to create a high demand and need for more housing units. The County's average household size has steadily declined from 3.4 persons per household in 1950 to 2.32 persons per household in 1988. As household size decreases, there is a need for proportionally more housing units to house the same or any additional population. Future projections for the County are shown below:

#### Marin County Projections

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	Percent Change <u>1980-1995</u>
Population	222,568	231,950	241,700	+8.5%
Households	88,723	97,770	103,310	+16.4%
Average Household Size (2.5)	2.51	2.30	2.26	-10%
Jobs	76,502	108,000	120,000	+56.8%
Jobs to People Ratio	1:2.9	1:2.1	1:2.0	---

SOURCE: ABAG, Projections '87, 1987.



The Mill Valley Planning Area, which includes the unincorporated Almonte, Homestead Valley, Tamalpais Valley and Alto neighborhoods, as well as the City of Mill Valley, is expected to decrease in population by 1.7% between 1980 and the year 1995 and is then projected to remain constant through the years 2005. Projected population, household and employment growth for the Mill Valley Planning Area is shown below.

### Mill Valley Planning Area

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	Percent Change <u>1980-1995</u>
Population	22,688	22,300	22,300	22,300	-1.7%
Households	9,595	9,830	10,080	10,270	+7.0%
Average Household Size	2.33	2.23	2.17	2.13	-8.5%
Jobs	5,336	5,700	5,900	5,900	+10.1%
Jobs to People Ratio	1:4.3	1:3.9	1:3.8	1:3.8	-----

SOURCE: ABAG, Projections - 87, 1987.

The City's portion of the population and households in 1995 is projected to be approximately 60 percent of the total for the planning area. This assumes that Mill Valley will add approximately 210 additional units and reach about 54% of its post-1988 build-out and 97% of its total buildout by that time. Thus, as indicated in the following table, by the year 1995, it is projected that the portion of the planning area within the Mill Valley city limits will have a slightly higher population of about 13,411, a total of 6,382 housing units and 6,157 households. These projections are based on the assumptions that the average household size is expected to decline to 2.13 persons per household by the year 1995 and the vacancy rate will increase to about 4 percent.

**City of Mill Valley Population and  
Housing Projections - 1988-1995**

	<u>1988*</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Total Units:	6,172	6,382**	+3.4%
% Vacant:	2.71	4.0	
Households (Occupied Units):	6,005	6,137	
Population/Household	2.17	2.13	
Household Population:	13,050	13,071	
Population in Group Quarters	339	339	
Total Population	13,389	13,411	+0.1%

\* State Department of Finance, 1988.

\*\* Assumes an average of 30 additional units per year or 210 additional units 1988-1995.

Implications: Future growth in population and jobs, both in Mill Valley and Marin County, as well as elsewhere, will continue to create a strong demand for housing. Some of the implications to consider include the following:

1. The match of types of jobs being created and the salaries or ability to pay for housing may continue to be disproportionate. About one-half of the jobs created in the County during the 1980's were lower paying jobs, which did not match the price of housing in the County.

2. The number of employed residents is expected to rise even faster than the number of jobs created. Thus, there will be a surplus of workers who will have to find jobs outside of the County.
3. The increasing demand for housing will continue to keep prices high. Housing for low and moderate income families, such as people who provide basic services will continue to be in short supply.

### **3.3.2 Declining Household Size**

A significant trend toward smaller households has taken place over the last 18 years. The estimated average household size in Mill Valley has declined from 2.7 in 1970 to 2.17 in 1988. The countywide average in 1988 was 2.32 persons per household. Thus, while the number of housing units in the City increased by 1,388 units (29%) from 4,784 in 1970 to 6,172 in 1988, the population increased by only 441 people (3.4%) from 12,942 in 1970 to 13,389 in 1988. By comparison, Mill Valley's average household size was the fourth smallest of all the cities in the county.

The trend in smaller households is due to more single-person households, lower birth rate, more divorces and the increased longevity of elderly people. Single-person households increased 75 percent between 1970 and 1980 and as of 1980 comprised 32 percent of all households in the City. The number of married couples comprised 44 percent of the households in 1980.

Implications: The trend toward smaller households is expected to continue through 1995. The implications include the following:

1. Need for smaller units in new projects.
2. Need for more units to house the same population.

### **3.3.3 The Ability to Pay for Housing**

The average sales price for a single family home in Mill Valley rose from \$127,935 in 1978 to \$413,000 in October 1988, a 225 percent increase over the ten-year period. Since single family homes currently comprise about 69 percent of the housing stock, this increase affects a substantial portion of the units available. In the County as a whole, the average price for a single family home was \$318,000 in 1988. At the time of the 1980

census, the median home value in the City was \$183,400, compared to \$151,000 in the County as a whole. In 1980, the median home value in Mill Valley was 21% higher than that for the County. In 1988, the average sales price was 30% higher than the County average.

Rents in Mill Valley were higher than the County in general. Median rents in 1980, meaning half were greater and half were less, were \$396 in Mill Valley and \$348 in the County as a whole. The April, 1984 Multiple Listing Service for rentals of all types of units indicated a median rent for one-bedroom units of \$650; two-bedroom units \$850; three-bedroom units \$1,200; and four- bedroom units \$1,350. The lowest rents for one-bedroom units ranged from \$375 to \$475. April, 1984 listings in the Independent Journal for condominium, apartment and duplex rentals indicated a median rent of \$573 for one-bedroom units and \$813 for two-bedroom units. In comparison, similar December 1988 listings in the Independent Journal indicated a median rent of \$730 for one-bedroom units and \$875 for two-bedroom units.

The impact of increasing housing prices and rents is most severe on households with lower incomes. According to the 1980 census, 33 percent of the City's households paid more than 25 percent of their income on housing - with 20 percent paying more than 35 percent. The following charts break down this overpayment need by income category (low income is less than 80 percent of median income, while moderate income is 80 to 120 percent of median income).

### 1980 Mill Valley Renter Households Paying More Than 25 Percent

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of All Households who Rent</u>
Low Income		
less than 5,000	166	8.1%
5,000-10,000	324	15.7%
10,000-15,000	299	14.5%
Moderate Income		
15,000-20,000	119	5.8%
20,000	157	7.6%
TOTAL	1,065	51.7%



**1980 Mill Valley Owner Households  
Paying More Than 25 Percent**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of All Households who Own</u>
Low Income		
less than 5,000	89	2.6%
5,000-10,000	77	2.2%
10,000-15,000	84	2.4%
Moderate Income		
15,000-20,000	116	3.3%
20,000+	391	11.4%
TOTAL	757	22.0%

SOURCE: 1980 U. S. Census

The following chart compares affordability for rental and sales housing based on various income levels and family sizes. Moderate income is defined as 80 to 120 percent of median income; low as 50 to 80 percent of median, and very low as less than 50 percent of median. The income levels are from the 1988 Marin County Income Limit Schedule based on the Bay Area median income.

**Income Affordability Analysis  
Rental Housing**

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Gross Annual Income</u>	<u>Percent of Median</u>	<u>Rent @ 30 % of Income</u>	<u>Unit Type</u>
2	\$34,000	100%	\$850	1-2 BR
4	\$42,500	100%	\$1063	2-3 BR
2	\$27,200	80%	\$680	1-2 BR
4	\$34,000	80%	\$850	2-3 BR
2	\$17,000	50%	\$425	1-2 BR
4	\$21,250	50%	\$531	2-4 BR

## Home Purchase\*

<u>Household</u> <u>Size</u>	<u>Gross Annual</u> <u>Income</u>	<u>Percent of</u> <u>Median</u>	<u>Maximum</u> <u>Sales Price</u>	<u>Unit Type</u>
2	\$34,000	100%	\$ 89,667	1-2 BR
4	\$42,500	100%	\$112,056	2-3 BR
2	\$27,200	80%	\$ 71,278	1-2 BR
4	\$34,000	80%	\$ 89,667	2-3 BR
2	\$17,000	50%	\$ 44,822	1-2 BR
4	\$21,250	50%	\$ 56,089	2-3 BR

**\*Assumptions:**

Interest Rate: 10% - Fixed

Term: 30 years

Principal and Interest: 25% of gross income

Down Payment: 10%

SOURCE: Based on 1988 Marin County Housing Authority Income Limit Schedule.

Implications: Due to high housing prices and interest rates, low and moderate income families have difficulty purchasing a home. In fact, because of the escalation in housing costs, many long-term Mill Valley homeowners could not afford to buy or rent a home in Mill Valley if they were moving into the community today. Some of the implications of increasing home prices include:

1. As home prices increase, there are usually corresponding increases in rents.
2. When a home owned by a low or moderate income family is sold, it is usually sold to a family with a relatively higher income - with the unit being lost as "affordable" housing.

3. Shared rentals can inflate rental rates and create traffic and parking impacts in the neighborhood.
4. Affordable housing for young families, single-parent households, the elderly (especially those on fixed incomes) and public service employees becomes more difficult to find.
5. As demand for housing increases, the vacancy rate decreases. In 1988, the City's estimated vacancy rate was 2.71 percent, which is relatively low compared to other Marin cities. A vacancy rate of 4.5 to 5.0 percent is considered "healthy". A vacancy rate of 4% was assumed for the 1995 population projections.
6. When the vacancy rate is low, housing also tends to become overcrowded and/or more expensive. In 1980, less than 2 percent of the housing units in Mill Valley were overcrowded (having more than one person per room), which is low.
7. Rental housing, especially through existing rental subsidy programs, is an effective way to provide affordable housing.
8. The difficulty in providing affordable units, especially on sites with environmental constraints.

#### **3.3.4 Rehabilitation Housing Needs**

Mill Valley's housing stock is generally in good condition, although it is much older than that of Marin County as a whole. According to the 1980 Census, 28 percent of Mill Valley's housing was constructed before 1940. Only 0.5 percent of the City's housing stock lacks plumbing facilities. Countywide, the figure is 0.8 percent.

There have been no housing condition surveys in the City since 1971, when a County survey of the stock found 15.5 percent of the units to be "substandard", the highest percentage of any community in Marin. Since demand for housing has remained strong, it is expected that the market has accomplished much rehabilitation on its own.

Some low and moderate income homeowners in the City may find it prohibitively expensive to finance the periodic maintenance of their homes. These homeowners may sell their homes if they cannot afford needed rehabilitation. While this would improve the condition of the housing stock, the original homeowners would probably be displaced.

Implications: Up-to-date data on Mill Valley's housing conditions and rehabilitation needs could help to determine whether there is a problem. Evidence from the 1971 survey and the high percentage of rehabilitation loans in the City suggest that this problem may be significant. Continued City support and publicizing of available rehabilitation programs is the best way to provide funds for low and moderate income homeowners. The City's presale inspection program is also effective in identifying problems.

Most of the less affluent homeowners in Mill Valley are ineligible for the rehabilitation programs that are currently available. The development of a program which provides subsidized financing to moderate income homeowners would assist in the retention of community diversity in Mill Valley.

### **3.3.5      Female-Head of Households**

In 1980, about 30 percent of Mill Valley's households are headed by women. Of those households with children under 18, almost 25 percent (406 households) were headed by a single mother. Both of these figures increased substantially since 1970.

Implications: Women in the housing market, especially the elderly, low- and moderate-income and single-parents face significant difficulties when they have to find housing. According to the County's Commission on the Status of Women, this has several implications:

1. Both owner and rental units are extremely expensive relative to low incomes earned by most women.
2. Some landlords have discriminated against women with children.
3. Elderly women are often "trapped" in a house that is more than adequate for their needs.



### **3.3.6      Handicapped Housing**

According to the Marin Center for Independent Living, which is a resource and referral service for handicapped people, there is a considerable waiting list for handicapped housing. Persons with work disability in Mill Valley totalled 457 or 3.5 percent of the population in 1980. Sixty percent of those disabled are in the work force. About 2.5 percent of the population had a transportation disability in 1980. Data on the number of physically handicapped who are inadequately housed in Mill Valley is unavailable.

Implications: The hilly terrain of many of the residential areas places practical limitations on residential opportunities for many mobility-handicapped persons. Flat sites where curb cuts and building access can be provided are ideal locations. Based on available data, about 4 percent of the City's units should be provided for the physically disabled. 26 units for the physically disabled were provided in the EAH 260 Camino Alto project and 10 units of housing for developmentally disabled residents have recently been constructed at 60 Camino Alto.

### **3.3.7      Housing for Large Families**

There were 330 families with five or more persons in Mill Valley in 1980, which represents 6.0 percent of all households. Since 1970, the number of large families has declined by 54 percent. Of the 2,631 units in Mill Valley in 1980 with three or more bedrooms, 438, or 15 percent, were renter-occupied, which make up 20 percent of the total rental housing stock. Most of these are single family homes which are expensive to rent. A countywide analysis by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development found that 31 percent of the large families who rent have incomes that would qualify them for federal assistance.

Implications: There is a need, therefore, for affordable rental units for large families (units with three more bedrooms). Except for Pickleweed and Shelter Hill, the other subsidized rental units in projects in the City are for elderly or handicapped. Other than new projects, the only programs for families are Section 8 and RMR rental assistance.

### **3.3.8**

#### **Elderly Housing**

The City has a higher proportion of residents over 65 years of age than countywide. However, the elderly population in the City is not increasing as rapidly as the county as a whole. Over 15 percent of the rental units in Mill Valley in 1980 had at least one person over 65 years of age. About three-fourths of the households with elderly residents are owner-occupied. About 30 percent of the residents over 65 live alone.

Implications: Mill Valley's elderly comprise 20 percent of all occupied units in the City. The increasing longevity of elderly people and the general aging of the population in Marin County and in Mill Valley will place increasing demands on the general and special housing needs of the elderly. These needs will include:

1. Need for more affordable housing for the elderly on fixed incomes (Countywide 45 percent of all elderly households are eligible for federal assistance because their incomes are less than \$15,000 per year).
2. The problem of being "trapped" in a large house, due in part to Proposition 13 and increasing home prices for substitute smaller housing units.
3. Greater demand for specialized housing and housing services for the elderly, such as congregate housing.

### **3.3.9**

#### **ABAG Housing Need Determinations**

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has produced projected housing need figures for Marin County and the Mill Valley Planning Area between 1988 and 1995 for various income categories. The figures are based on market demand, employment opportunities, land availability, commuting patterns, type and tenure of housing and a more "healthy" vacancy rate of 4.5 percent. The chart below summarizes ABAG's housing needs figures.

**1988-1995 Projected Housing Need  
as Determined by ABAG**

MARIN COUNTY

<u>Type of Need</u>	<u>Projected Need</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
By Income Category:		
Very Low	2,004	19%
Low	1,567	15%
Moderate	2,082	20%
Above Moderate	4,836	46%
TOTAL	10,489	100%

MILL VALLEY PLANNING AREA

<u>Type of Need</u>	<u>Projected Need</u>		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Percent of County</u>
By Income Category:			
Very Low	28	19%	1.3%
Low	22	15%	1.4%
Moderate	28	19%	1.3%
Above Moderate	71	47%	1.4%
TOTAL	149	100%	1.4%

CITY OF MILL VALLEY PORTION

<u>Projected Need</u>			
<u>Type of Need</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Planning Area</u>	<u>Percent of County</u>
By Income Category:			
Very Low	17	60%	0.8%
Low	13	60%	0.8%
Moderate	17	60%	0.8%
Above Moderate	43	60%	0.8%
TOTAL	90	60%	0.8%

Definitions:

Very Low Income - Less than 50% of median ncome

Low Income - 50-80% of median income

Moderate Income - 80-120% of income

Above Moderate Income - 120% or more of median income.



**Total Anticipated Development  
in the Mill Valley Planning Area  
1988-1995**

1988 - 1995 Anticipated Development Potential

in Mill Valley	210 units*
in Unincorporated Area	<u>140 units**</u>
Total	350 units

ABAG Housing Need Determinations

1980 - 1990:	21 units
1990-1995:	<u>128 units</u>
Total	149 units

Anticipated units in relation to ABAG need: 235%

Implications: The City's Housing Objectives, described in the next section of the Housing Element, relate the City's housing programs to the ABAG regional housing need determinations for various income groups. However, it is important to note that even with the significant reduction in density that recently occurred on the former RP (now RSP-RMP) zoned parcels, the total new housing need (21 units between 1988 and 1990 and an additional 128 units between 1990 and 1995) for the entire Mill Valley Planning Area can not only be adequately met, but will likely be greatly exceeded. In spite of the limited funding sources for low and moderate income housing, it appears that the housing need for low, and moderate income households can also be met.

\* Assumes average of 30 additional units per year

\*\* Assumes average of 20 additional units per year.

### 3.4

## HOUSING GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This Housing Element proposes at least partial solutions to some of the housing needs and problems facing the community - while at the same time intending to protect Mill Valley's small-town character and appearance, its environmental qualities, its sense of community and its historic heritage.

The Housing Element's intent with respect to housing needs in Mill Valley is expressed in two ways. The first is in the form of a goal and objectives sought by the community. A Goal is the ideal we strive for - the desired state of things. Objectives are defined steps toward a goal, which measure progress and should be expressed in quantified terms or targets. State law requires that the City's housing objectives establish the maximum number of housing units that can be constructed, rehabilitated or conserved over the next 7 years. The second, and more specific aspects of the Housing Element, are policy statements and implementation programs. These describe the way citizens and local government can achieve objectives, and move closer to the goal. Policies establish a recognized community position on a particular subject. Programs are more detailed actions that the City, or other specific entities, intend to implement to ensure the attainment of the Housing Element's goal and objectives.

### 3.4.1 Housing Goal

The City's housing goal is to provide for balanced residential growth and at least our share of the region's affordable housing while:

- o maintaining diversity in the price and type of housing available within the community;
- o promoting the development and retention of housing affordable to low and moderate income families;
- o promoting means enabling existing residents to preserve and improve their homes, particularly those of historical significance;

- o promoting development in areas where it will not interfere with the quality of the natural and man made environment;
- o limiting development in areas where hazards to life and property exist;
- o generally maintaining the present scale of development in existing residential neighborhoods, while allowing the regulated creation of additional housing;
- o encouraging residential uses in commercial areas when appropriate; and
- o assuring non-discrimination in the local housing market, especially for families with children.

#### **3.4.2      Housing Objectives**

The following objectives set forth the City's housing effort for the seven-year period between 1988 and 1995:

- I.      Construction of 210 new housing units in the City of all types and prices (this assumes an average of approximately 30 additional units per year), including:
  - a.      10 low income developmentally disabled units.
  - b.      30 new low and moderate income family rental apartments in another Pickleweed type City sponsored housing project.
  - c.      35 second units.  
(average of 5 additional units per year).
  - d.      20 additional multi-family infill units.  
(average of 3 additional units per year)

- e. 65 additional single family infill units.  
(average of 9 additional units per year)
  - f. 50 residential units on the former RP (now RSP-RMP) zoned parcels.  
(average of 7 additional units per year)
- 2. New residential construction should meet some of the special housing needs within Mill Valley. Of the 210 units created through new construction, the following should be provided. (These estimates are based on the proportion these special need groups comprised of the 1980 population in the City).
  - a. 8 units accessible to the physically handicapped (4 percent of total).
  - b. 32 units available for the elderly (15 percent).
  - c. 53 new units for families with children (25 percent) with 11 of those (5 percent of total) for large families - i.e., units with 3 or more bedrooms)
- 3. The City is also desirous of trying to slightly shift back to the historic balance of housing types and tenure. The following mix of the 210 new units is desirable:
  - a. 69 multiple family and second units (33%)  
141 single family units (67%)
  - b. 126 owner-occupied units (60%) (including 13 new condominiums)  
84 renter-occupied units (40%)
- 4. Rental assistance program subsidies for approximately 50 households per year.

The following chart compares the City's housing objectives to the ABAG Regional Housing Need Determination and also describes the programs through which the objectives are to be met. Generally, the objectives are derived from the detailed buildout potential study contained in the Land Use Section and review of historic construction trends and the availability of programs to meet special housing needs. For



further information, see the assumptions for each program in the next section (Section 3.5) and the discussion of housing needs and issues in the previous section (Section 3.3).

In summary, it is expected that the number of additional residential units which will likely be built within the City of Mill Valley (which constitutes only approximately 60% of the planning area will itself provide 140% of the regional housing need for the entire planning area between 1988 and 1995, without taking into consideration the new residential development which will occur in the unincorporated area. Programs available for very low, low and moderate income housing will allow the City to meet its portion of the housing need determinations. Programs to provide very low income housing are expected to provide 18 units (106 percent of the 17 unit need), programs to provide low income housing are expected to provide 23 units (177 percent of the 13 unit need) and programs to provide moderate income housing are expected to provide 43 units (253 percent of the 17 unit need).

**COMPARISON CITY OF MILL VALLEY HOUSING OBJECTIVES  
AND PROGRAM TARGETS WITH ABAG'S  
REGIONAL HOUSING NEED DETERMINATIONS  
1988 - 1995**

**Very Low Income-Households**

1.	ABAG 1988-1995 need:	17 units
2.	Housing Element Programs within City 1988-1995:	
	. Rental Assistance Programs	5 units
	. Miscellaneous Government Programs	3 units
	. Camino Alto Developmentally Disabled Project	<u>10 units</u>
	Total Units Expected:	18 units
	(Percent of ABAG Need):	(106%)

### Low Income Households

1.	ABAG 1988-1995 need:	13 units
2.	Housing Element Programs within City 1988-1995:	
	• City sponsored BMR family rental project	18 units
	• Rental assistance programs	<u>5 units</u>
	Total Units Expected:	23 units
	(Percent of ABAG Need):	(177%)

### Moderate Income Households

1.	ABAG 1988-1995 Need:	17 units
2.	Housing Element Programs within City 1988-1995:	
	• City sponsored BMR family rental project	12 units
	• Inclusionary Housing	1 unit
	• Miscellaneous Government Program	5 units
	• Second Units	20 units
	• Mixed use/multi-family infill	<u>5 units</u>
	Total Units Expected:	43 units
	(percent of ABAG Need):	(253 %)

### **Above Moderate Income Households**

1.	ABAG 1988-1995 Need:	43 units
2.	Housing Element Programs within City 1988-1995:	
	• Mixed Use/Multi-Family Infill	15 units
	• Second Units	15 units
	• Miscellaneous Construction	<u>96 units</u>
	Total Units Expected:	126 units
	(percent of ABAG Need):	(293%)

### **Total Housing Need**

1.	ABAG 1988-1995 Need	90 units
2.	Average additional units per year	30 units
3.	Total Units Expected (percent of total need):	210 units (233%)

### **3.5 HOUSING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

#### **PROVIDING FOR BALANCED RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AND AT LEAST OUR SHARE OF THE REGION'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Policy H-1:** The City shall encourage the construction of new housing units of all types and prices in order to meet our regional housing needs and achieve the City's housing goal and objectives consistent with the General Plan and other City policies.

**Program H-1-1:** The City will continue to review and process development applications to provide new housing through private, non-profit and public agency construction of new housing.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Time Frame and Target:** 210 additional units by 1995

(Assumptions: Between 1970 and 1984, an average of 85 units were built per year. Between 1984 and 1988, an average of 103 units per year were added. The Housing Element assumes the addition of an average of 30 units per year between 1988 and 1995. Except for second units, most of the market rate units would be available for above moderate income families).

**Program H-1-2:** The City will consider the following ordinance changes intended to reduce potential governmental constraints to the provision of affordable housing:

1. Reduce the standard for park land dedication from the current basis of 2.77 persons per unit to 2.13 persons per unit.
2. Restructure the park land dedication fee to make it more equitable for relatively higher density infill projects.



3. Where appropriate, allow combined processing of Master Plans, Development Plans and Tentative Subdivision Maps.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Time Frame:** Consider ordinance changes by January, 1991.

## MAINTAINING DIVERSITY IN THE PRICE AND TYPE OF HOUSING AVAILABLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

**Policy H-2:** The City shall require developers of new housing developments with 2 or more more units or lots to provide a percentage of the units affordable to low and/or moderate income households or pay in-lieu fees to the City housing fund to assist in the development of low and moderate income housing.

**Program H-2-1:** The City will apply the following inclusionary housing requirements to new development:

### Inclusionary Unit Requirements for Rental Residential Developments of Ten or More Dwelling Units.

In rental residential projects of ten or more dwelling units with a gross density of less than seven units per acre, ten percent of the units shall be inclusionary rental units affordable by moderate income households. In rental projects of ten or more dwelling units with a gross density of seven or more units per acre, 15 percent of the units shall be inclusionary rental units affordable by moderate income households.

### Inclusionary Unit Requirements for Ownership Residential Developments of Ten or More Dwelling Units or Lots with A Gross Density of Greater Than One Unit Per Acre.

In ownership residential projects of ten or more dwelling units or lots with a gross density greater than one and less than seven units or lots per acre, ten percent of the units shall be inclusionary units sold at

prices affordable by moderate income households (earning 100% of median income). In ownership residential projects of ten or more units with a gross density of seven or more units per acre, 15 percent of the units shall be inclusionary units sold at prices affordable by moderate income households (earning 100% of median income).

In-lieu Participation Fee Requirement for Residential Developments of Two to Nine Dwelling Units or Lots and Those with A Gross Density of Less Than One Unit Per Acre.

Projects of two to nine residential units or lots and those with a gross density of less than one unit per acre shall contribute an in-lieu participation fee to the City housing fund. These in-lieu fees shall be used by the City or its designee such as a non-profit housing development corporation for the purpose of developing affordable housing for low or moderate income households in the City.

In-lieu participation fee for the second residential unit or lot and each residential unit or lot thereafter shall be calculated as follows:

1. Second residential units and other residential units with a gross enclosed floor area of 700 sq. ft. or less: Exempt from in-lieu fee.
2. Residential units with a gross enclosed floor area of 701 to 1,000 sq. ft.: 5% of the current inclusionary subsidy differential established by the City.
3. Residential units with a gross enclosed floor area of 1,001 to 1,500 sq. ft.: 8% of the current inclusionary subsidy differential established by the City.
4. Residential units with gross enclosed floor area greater than 1,500 sq. ft. or new residential lots: 11% of the current inclusionary subsidy differential established by the City.

The inclusionary subsidy differential is the difference between what a moderate income family (earning one hundred percent of median income) can afford to pay for housing and the estimated total cost of a new unit of appropriate size, as

determined by the City. The inclusionary subsidy differential shall be calculated and adjusted annually by the Director of Planning and Building.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Time Frame and Target:** 1 new inclusionary unit by 1995 and a City-sponsored project of 30 low and moderate income family rental units by 1992.

**Policy H-3:** The City shall encourage the construction of smaller, preferably rental housing units to provide a housing alternative to the predominately large, single-family detached homes currently being built.

**Program H-3-1:** The City will amend the Municipal Code to create new multi-family zoning districts which relate the number of residential units to their size and permit a greater number of relatively smaller units or a less number of larger units as described in the Land Use section.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Creation of new zoning districts by July, 1990.

**Program H-3-2:** The City will consider amending the Municipal Code to revise the City parking standards to require less parking for smaller units (studio, 1 bedroom) than that required for larger homes (5 bedrooms) as is currently the case.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Time Frame:** Consider ordinance changes by January, 1991.

**Policy H-4:** The City shall continue to recognize manufactured housing as a viable housing type and shall not preclude the installation of manufactured housing on permanent foundations subject to the same design considerations which apply to site built housing.

**Program H-4-1:** The City will continue to allow manufactured housing on permanent foundations.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** 1 unit by 1995.

(Assumptions: No proposals for manufactured housing have been received to date and, because of the high land values within the community, few are expected.)

## PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE TO LOW AND MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES

**Policy H-5:** In a cooperative public and private effort, the City shall encourage developers (both for profit and non-profit) to utilize available government programs and funding from other sources for development of low-and-moderate income housing.

**Program H-5-1:** The City will continue to work with the Marin County Housing Authority, other government agencies, the Marin Community Foundation, and non-profit housing corporations such as Marin Ecumenical Association for Housing and B.R.I.D.G.E. to encourage the use of state and federal housing program funds and other funds. The potential funding sources include the following:

- a. Section 202 loans to finance rental and cooperative housing projects for the elderly or physically handicapped.
- b. Community Development Block Grants for low-income households.
- c. Marin Community Foundation.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley.

**Timeframe and Target:** 10 very low-income and 5 low-income units by 1995.

**Policy H-6:** The City shall encourage the development of new low and moderate income rental housing.

**Program H-6-1:** Using the City's Article 34 authority, the City will develop another small-scale low and moderate income rental housing project similar to Pickleweed on a surplus school site or sites.



**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** 30 low and moderate income family rental units by 1992.  
(Assumptions: Assumes successful negotiations with the Mill Valley School District for acquisition or long-term lease of a site or sites and obtaining adequate funds through Community Development Block Grants, "in-lieu" fees and the Marin Community Foundation.)

**Program H-6-2:** The City will encourage the Housing Authority or non-profit groups to develop low-income rental housing projects. Opportunities will be encouraged on an ongoing basis.

**Responsible Agencies:** City of Mill Valley; Housing Authority; non-profit housing sponsors.

**Target:** 5 low-income rental units.  
(Assumptions: Assumes the availability of funding, and an appropriate site).

**Policy H-7: The City shall facilitate processing and encourage development of affordable housing which meets special housing needs in the community.**

**Program H-7-1:** The City will consider amending the Municipal Code to establish a special multi-family residential zoning classification to give the City the option of allowing small, special need (i.e., handicapped, elderly) multiple family units at a greater density than that allowed in the new "Lower Density Multi-Family" and "Higher Density Multi-Family" zoning districts described in the Land Use section.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Consider ordinance changes by January, 1991.

**Program H-7-2:** In order to reduce the permit processing time, the City will continue "fast-track" processing of applications for low and moderate income housing.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Target:** Reduce cost/price of below market rate housing units.

(Assumptions: Assumes that the project does not have significant environmental, safety or design constraints.)

**Policy H-8:** In order to retain its existing stock of affordable rental housing, the City shall strongly discourage conversion of existing multiple family rental units to condominiums unless there is a clear public benefit.

**Program H-8-1:** The City will continue to implement the Condominium Conversion Ordinance.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**Program H-8-2:** The City will consider amending the Municipal Code to allow exceptions for limited equity cooperatives. Unlike "market-rate" cooperatives, a limited equity cooperative would place a limit on the increased share of the total value of the cooperative so that the "share" remains at an affordable level.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Consider amendment by July, 1991.

**Policy H-9:** The City shall encourage and support rental subsidy programs which make existing rental units affordable to low income households and the physically handicapped.

**Program H-9-1:** The City shall continue to work with the Interfaith Housing Council, the Marin County Community Development Block Grant Program and the Marin Community Foundation to ensure that the Shelter Hill Apartment project (constructed under HUD Section 236) remains affordable to low and moderate income families.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley; Marin County Community Development Block Grant Program; Marin Community Foundation and Interfaith Housing Council.

**Target:** To keep the 75 rental units affordable to low and moderate income families.

**Program H-9-2:** The City will support new Housing Authority proposals to the Marin Community Foundation for additional funds to continue the Rebate for Marin Renters (RMR) program and will continue to allocate at least the City's minimum local match from the General Fund.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley; Housing Authority; Marin Community Foundation.

**Timeframe and Target:** 15 households provided assistance per year.

(Assumption: Continued funding from the Marin Community Foundation at about the previous level; Mill Valley's portion is adequate to currently help 16 families per year.)

**Program H-9-3:** The City will support continuation of the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program for low-income families.

**Responsible Agency:** Housing Authority

**Target:** 30 very low-income households (elderly, handicapped, and families) provided assistance per year.

(Assumption: The continuation of the program; in 1988, 31 households received assistance.)

**Program H-9-4:** The City will support continuation of Project Independence for the physically, mentally or developmentally disabled.

**Responsible Agency:** Housing Authority

**Target:** 2 households provided assistance per year.

(Assumption: Continued funding for the program; currently, Mill Valley has one household assisted.)

**Program H-9-5:** The City will support continuation of the HUD voucher program.

**Responsible Agency:** Housing Authority

**Target:** 5 households per year.

(Assumption: Continued funding of the program at about the current level. In 1988, Mill Valley had 7 household assisted through the program.)

## PROMOTING MEANS ENABLING EXISTING RESIDENTS TO PRESERVE AND IMPROVE THEIR HOMES

**Policy H-10:** The City shall work with and encourage the Housing Authority and non-profit sponsors to acquire and, if necessary, rehabilitate selected smaller rental properties as a means of preserving existing affordable housing.

**Program H-10-1:** The City will continue to cooperate with the County Housing Authority in acquiring additional appropriate units as the opportunity arises.

**Responsible Agencies:** City of Mill Valley; County Housing Authority; non-profit sponsors.

**Timeframe and Target:** 5 units owned by the City, County Housing Authority and non-profit housing groups by 1995.

(Assumption: unit feasibility and funds for acquisition and subsidy).

**Policy H-11:** In a cooperative effort of the public and private sector, the City shall encourage the rehabilitation of older housing to preserve neighborhood character and to create safe, habitable dwelling units without significantly increasing costs to present low-and moderate-income residents.

**Program H-11-1:** The City will promote rehabilitation loan programs administered by the Housing Authority through increased public awareness (i.e. making pamphlets and other material available at City Hall, the library, etc.) and continue the City's presale inspection program.

**Responsible Agency:** Housing Authority



**Timeframe and Target:** 20 units rehabilitated by 1995.

(Assumption: Mill Valley residents historically have received 12 percent of the loans funded; Through 1988, 13 units had been provided assistance. The County generally funds about 30 loans per year.).

**Program H-11-2:** The City will continue to inspect all residential units prior to resale. The inspections indicate zoning violations and point out safety related matters to assure that the units are safe and conform to the building code.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** 1,750 presale inspections by 1995.

(Assumption: Assumes a rate of about 250 units per year, which is approximately the average rate between 1982 and 1988.)

**Policy H-12** The City shall discourage the conversion of existing residential units to other uses unless there is a clear public benefit or equivalent housing is being provided.

**Program H-12-1:** The City shall consider revising the Municipal Code to remove offices as a conditionally permitted use in multi-family zoning districts.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** July, 1990.

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS WHERE IT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL AND MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT

**Policy H-13:** The City shall encourage relatively higher density development adjacent to the downtown and along lower Miller Avenue where such development will not create or exacerbate problems in the neighborhood. Single family detached housing should be developed on an infill basis and at lower densities in Blithedale Canyon, Middle Ridge, and Cascade Canyon and on the former RP properties.

**Program H-13-1:** The City will implement the policies of Land Use section and retain the existing pattern of multi-family land use adjacent to the downtown and along Miller and single-family land use in the neighborhoods.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** 20 new multi-family units by 1995.

**Policy H-14:** Because of the lack of relatively large, flat and inexpensively developable land, if any school site or sites are determined to be surplus by the Mill Valley School District, they would provide a unique opportunity for the construction of affordable housing.

**Program H-14-1:** The City will continue working with the School District on an ongoing basis toward acquisition or long-term lease of a surplus school site or sites for development of B.M.R. housing.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** Development of 30 low and moderate income family rental units on a surplus school site or sites by 1992.

#### LIMITING DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS WHERE HAZARDS TO LIFE AND PROPERTY EXIST

**Policy H-15:** The City shall continue to severely restrict development in those areas identified in the Public Health and Safety section of the General Plan as subject to high fire hazards, flooding, ground failure, and subsidence. Such areas include portions of the Cascade, Fern, Blithedale and Warner Canyons, and parts of the East Mill Valley Bayfront area.

**Program H-15-1:** While reviewing residential projects, the City shall assure that new residential development is consistent with the policies in the Land Use and Public Health and Safety sections of the General Plan and shall require any additional information necessary to fully evaluate the impacts from development proposals as part of the environmental review of the projects.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing as development projects are reviewed.

GENERALLY MAINTAINING THE PRESENT SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE ALLOWING THE REGULATED CREATION OF ADDITIONAL HOUSING

**Policy H-16:** New development in existing residential areas shall be of a scale and character complementary to that of the neighborhood in order to protect existing neighborhoods and prevent overbuilding of the property.

**Program H-16-1:** The City will amend the Municipal Code to incorporate an "Adjusted Floor Area Ratio" standard as described in the Land Use section which will apply to all new homes and all additions to residential buildings.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Revision of zoning ordinance by April, 1990, implementation will then be ongoing.

**Program H-16-2:** Because the existing RM-1.5 zoning along Lovell Avenue, Corte Madera Avenue, and West Blithedale Avenue potentially allows higher density development (up to 29 units per acre) than is appropriate, given the small size of the parcels, scale of existing buildings in the neighborhood and the existing parking problems, the City will initiate hearings to revise the zoning to bring it into compliance with the policies in the multi-family density section of the Land Use section.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** April 1990 - One of highest priorities for General Plan/zoning consistency rezonings.

**Policy H-17:** New residential development shall be compatible with and complimentary to the design of existing buildings in the neighborhood.

**Program H-17-1:** In order to provide direction for applicants and criteria for use by the City in considering Design Review applications for residential developments, the City will utilize the design standards contained in the Land Use section during the review of proposed developments.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Ongoing.

**Policy H-18:** Because many of the undeveloped properties can only be served by roads passing through existing residential neighborhoods, the development potential shall be limited to densities which will minimize impacts on existing neighborhoods. The densities specified in the Land Use section were determined to balance property rights and housing policies with the concerns of existing residents over increasing traffic.

**Program H-18-1:** The City will carefully restrict development as specified in the Land Use section.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Ongoing.

**Policy H-19** Because they provide smaller relatively more affordable housing, the City shall continue to encourage the construction of new second units and the legalization of existing second units where they will not aggravate or create neighborhood problems.

**Program H-19-1:** The City will continue to implement the intent of the Second Unit Ordinance while being flexible in reviewing Conditional Use Permits for illegal units.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** 35 new second units and 100 legalized units by 1995. (Assumptions: 5 new units per year (which is lower than the historic average and higher than the rate between 1986 and 1988) and 15 legalized units per year.



**Program H-19-2:** The City will continue to schedule hearings before the Zoning Administrator on notices of intention to file a notice of violation for properties suspected to have second units in order to encourage owners of illegal units to upgrade them, provide additional parking and legalize them.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** Approximately 120 notices per year in order to get through the complete list of illegal units by July, 1990.

## ENCOURAGING RESIDENTIAL USES IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

**Policy H-20:** The City shall continue to encourage the development of residential uses along Lower Miller Avenue and in the Lytton Square/Town Center area.

**Program H-20-1:** The City will continue to implement this policy on a case-by-case basis in discussions with prospective applicants and develop more specific policies and implementation procedures/incentives particularly for the downtown area.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe and Target:** 20 new, multiple family units by 1995.

**Program H-20-2:** The City will consider revising the existing zoning standards and policies applicable to mixed use in the downtown area. This could include the

development of incentive to encourage the development of mixed use residential units. Examples of incentives which could be considered include:

- a. Allowing an additional story (within the permitted height limit) for housing.
- b. Developing more flexible parking requirements to reflect peak period overlap for mixed use projects.

- c. Relating permitted residential density and parking requirements to unit size (i.e., allowing a greater number of smaller units or lesser number of larger units).

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Completion of review and, if appropriate, revisions to Municipal Code by July 1, 1991.

## ASSURING NON-DISCRIMINATION

**Policy H-21:** The City shall remain committed to provided housing opportunities for all people and will take appropriate actions to prevent housing discrimination in the local housing market.

**Program H-21-1:** The City will coordinate with public and non-profit agencies such as Landlord Tenant Mediation Services, Marin Center for Independent Living, Housing Authority, etc. to implement this policy. The City will concentrate on eliminating housing discrimination against families with children since this is the major housing discrimination problem in Marin County.

**Responsible Agency:** City of Mill Valley

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

### 3.6 SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The summary below highlights specific implementing actions intended to achieve the goal and objectives of Mill Valley's Housing Element. In some cases, these are time referenced when a particular date can be established. Some are ongoing actions intended to be undertaken by the City. Other actions are intended to be undertaken by other public agencies or groups.

The unit targets, if any, are shown in parenthesis. It should be noted that many of these actions and targets are dependent on the availability of program funding, housing market conditions and other variables which are outside of the City's control.

#### 1988 - 1995 SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>RESPONSIBLE</u> <u>AGENCY</u>	<u>DATE (Target)</u>
<b>GENERAL</b>		
1. Complete next review and revision of the General Plan	City	Prior to January 1995

#### PROVIDING FOR BALANCED RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AND AT LEAST OUR SHARE OF THE REGION'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2. Processing new residential projects	City	On-going (210 new units by 1995)
3. Consider possible revisions to zoning ordinance regarding governmental constraints	City	January, 1991

**MAINTAINING DIVERSITY IN THE  
PRICE AND TYPE OF HOUSING  
AVAILABILITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

4.	Inclusionary housing/in-lieu fees	City	On-going (1 new inclusionary unit by 1995 and 30 new BMR family rental units by 1992)
5.	Consider revisions to zoning ordinance to encourage smaller units.	City	July, 1990
6.	Consider possible revisions to parking requirements for small units.	City	January, 1991
7.	Manufactured housing	City	On-going (1 unit by 1995)

**PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
RETENTION OF HOUSING AFFORDABLE  
TO LOW AND MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES**

8.	Government programs & other funding for new housing construction	City Non-Profits Other agencies	(10 very low and 5 moderate income units by 1995)
9.	New affordable family rental housing project	City Non-profits	(30 low-income family rental units by 1992)



10.	Other low-income rental project(s)	City Housing Authority Non-Profit Sponsor	(5 low-income rental units)
11.	Consider creation of "special needs" zoning district.	City	January, 1991
12.	"Fast-Track" processing of low- and moderate income projects.	City	On-going
13.	Condominium conversion ordinance	City	On-going
14.	Consider exempting limited equity cooperatives from condominium conversion requirements.	City	July, 1991
15.	Rebate for Marin Renters program	City Housing Authority Marin Community Foundation	(25 low-income households per year)
16.	Section 8 Rental Assistance	Housing Authority	(30 very low-income households per year)
17.	Project Independence	Housing Authority	(2 low-income households per year)
18.	HUD Voucher Program	Housing Authority	(5 low-income households per year)

**PROMOTING MEANS ENABLING EXISTING  
RESIDENTS TO PRESERVE AND IMPROVE THEIR HOMES**

19.	Acquisition of existing housing.	City Housing Authority Non-profits	(5 rental units by 1995)
20.	Residential rehabilitation loan program	Housing Authority	(20 low-income units rehabilitated by 1995)
21.	Pre-sale inspections	City	On-going (1,750 additional inspections by 1995)
22.	Consider revision of zoning ordinance to remove offices as a permitted use in multi-family districts	City	July, 1990

**PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS WHERE IT  
WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE QUALITY  
OF THE NATURAL AND MAN MADE ENVIRONMENT**

23.	Relatively higher density downtown and above Miller	City	Ongoing, (20 additional multi-family units by 1995)
24.	Use of school site(s) for B.M.R. housing	City Mill Valley School District	(30 new low and moderate income families rental units by 1992)

**LIMITING DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS WHERE HAZARDS  
TO LIFE AND PROPERTY EXIST**

- |     |  |      |          |
|-----|--|------|----------|
| 25. | Limiting development<br>in hazardous areas | City | Ongoing. |
|-----|--|------|----------|

**GENERALLY MAINTAINING THE PRESENT SCALE  
OF DEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS  
WHILE ALLOWING THE REGULATED CREATION OF ADDITIONAL HOUSING**

- |     |  |      |  |
|-----|--|------|--|
| 26. | Revision of zoning<br>ordinance to add "Adjusted<br>Floor Area Ratio" standards<br>to regulate scale of<br>residential buildings | City | April, 1990  |
| 27. | Rezoning of RM areas<br>to new "Higher Density<br>Multi-Family" and "Lower<br>Density Multi-Family"<br>designations.             | City | July, 1990   |
| 28. | Review of projects using<br>design guidelines in<br>Land Use section   | City | Ongoing  |
| 29. | Restricting development<br>potential as called for<br>in Land Use section to maintain<br>acceptable levels of service            | City | Ongoing  |
| 30. | Reviewing applications for<br>new second units and<br>legalization of existing<br>units  | City | (Ongoing 35 new<br>units and 100<br>legalized units<br>by 1995 |

31.	Second Unit Notice of Violation hearings	City	Complete review of 250 existing units by July, 1990
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#### ENCOURAGING RESIDENTIAL USES IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

32.	Encouraging mixed use development in downtown area	City	Ongoing.
33.	Revisions to zoning ordinance provisions for mixed use areas.	City	July 1, 1991

#### ASSURING NON-DISCRIMINATION

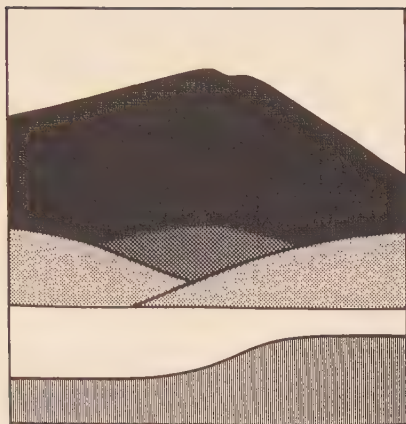
34.	Take appropriate actions as needed to eliminate discrimination	City Other Agencies	Ongoing.
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Sec5



# TRANSPORTATION

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## **4. Transportation**

### **4.1 PURPOSE**

This Transportation Section constitutes the mandatory Circulation Element and describes the existing and future conditions of the roadway network, parking supply and demand, transit service and patronage, bikeways and urban trails, and truck routes in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. Future conditions are based upon the assumptions regarding buildout of the area as described in the Land Use Section. Travel demand forecasts are directly related to the land use forecasts. This reflects the high degree of interdependence between the transportation system and existing and potential land uses.

The Transportation Section considers the variety of travel purposes in the Mill Valley/ Tamalpais Planning Area, including home-to-work trips, whose peaking characteristics most heavily burden the transportation system, and non-work travel, such as for shopping, educational, and recreational purposes. The Transportation Section identifies potential transportation issues, describes their nature and scope, forecasts future conditions and problem areas, and proposes mitigation measures.

### **4.2 OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

The Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area is faced with many of the same problems facing other Marin County and Bay Area communities. These include weekday peak period traffic congestion, through and commuter traffic using local and collector streets rather than arterial streets, and inadequate parking supply in downtown shopping areas and at commuter park-and-ride lots.

In addition, some problems are unique to the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. Several intersections in the planning area operate poorly and are frequently congested on weekends as well as weekday peak periods. These intersections are located along the two major access routes to the planning area -- East Blithedale Avenue and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1. These two roadways have severe constraints to widening, which makes it difficult (or impossible) to reduce traffic congestion. Widening either road would not only raise major environmental issues, but

will also require the acquisition and demolition of relatively affordable housing units. In other parts of the planning area, narrow and/or steep roadways pose potential vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and public safety problems, particularly when vehicles are parked along the narrow roadway shoulders. In many of the hillside residential areas, insufficient on-site parking results in the parking of vehicles on shoulders, and makes enforcement of parking regulations difficult.

In summary, the major transportation issues for the planning area are increasing traffic congestion and safety problems and inadequate parking supply.

## **4.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **4.3.1 Roadway Network**

The Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area lies west of U.S. 101, the major freeway connecting Marin County to San Francisco to the south and Sonoma County to the north. Three freeway interchanges connect the area to U.S. 101 and also provide access to areas east of the freeway: East Blithedale/Tiburon Boulevard, Seminary Drive/Redwood Highway Frontage Road, and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 (see **Figure 4.1**).

Arterial streets within the Planning Area include East Blithedale Avenue, and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, as well as Miller Avenue, Almonte Boulevard, and Camino Alto. West of the Mill Valley city limits, in the Tamalpais Planning Area, Panoramic Highway and Sequoia Valley Road are the most heavily travelled roadways to and from the major recreational areas on Mt. Tamalpais and in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore in West Marin.

### **Travel Volumes**

Nine segments of these roadways were analyzed using 24-hour traffic volume data. **Table 4.1** indicates the data and total 24-hour volume for each of the nine segments, and **Figure 4.2** shows the locations. These locations and days were chosen to be representative of both weekday commute traffic and weekend recreational traffic.







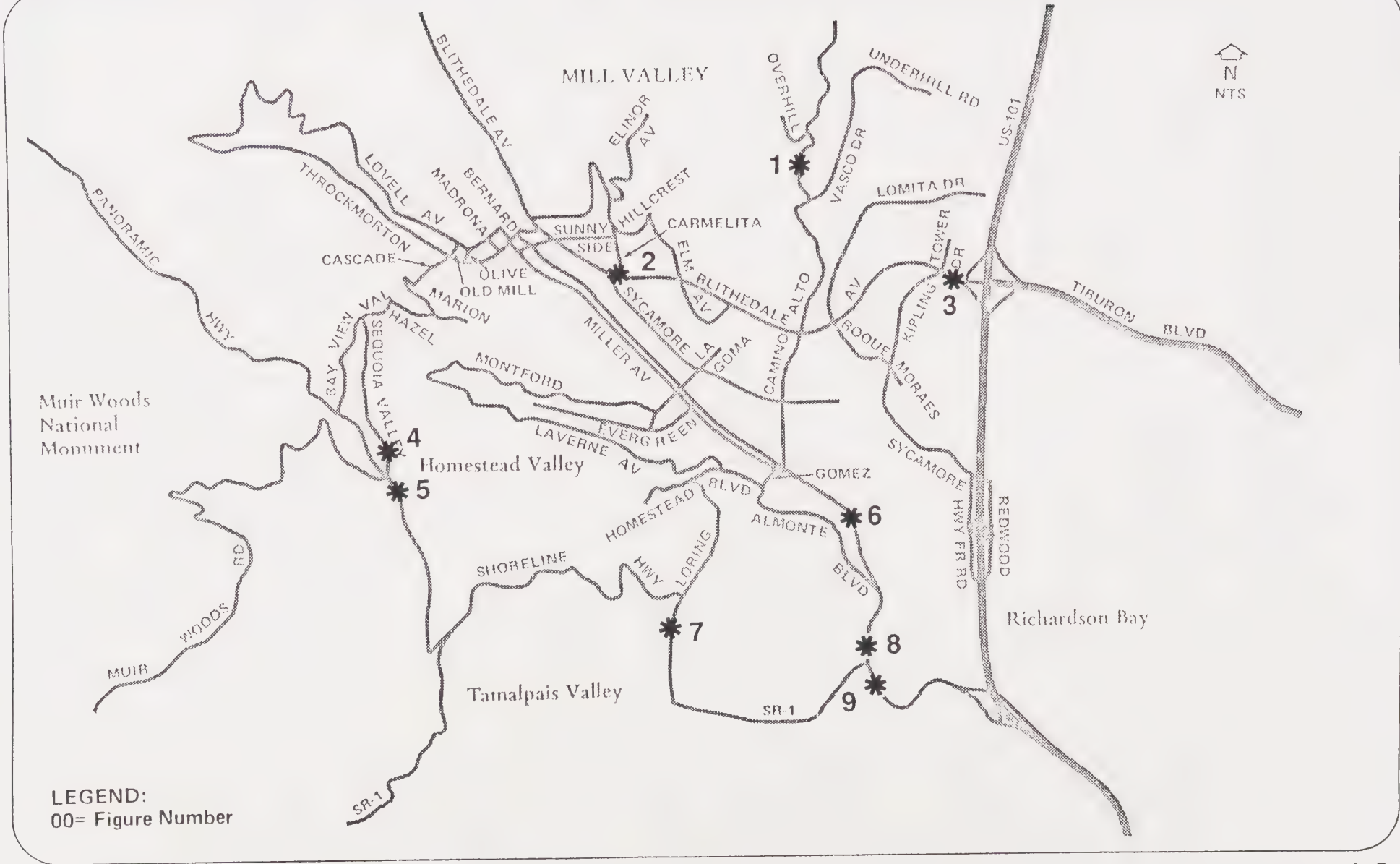


Figure 4.2

## TWENTY-FOUR HOUR COUNT LOCATIONS





**TABLE 4.1**  
**TWENTY-FOUR HOUR TRAFFIC VOLUME DATA**

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date Counts Taken</u>	<u>24-hour Volume</u>
1. Camino Alto (between Vasco & Overhill)	Wednesday Sept. 10, 1986	SB-1,580 NB-2,320
2. E. Blithedale Avenue (between Sycamore & Carmelita)	Wednesday Sept. 10, 1986	ED-7,790 WB-7,220
3. Tiburon Boulevard (west of SB on-ramp to Highway 101 and east of Tower Drive)	Wednesday June 19, 1985	EB-17,640 WB-20,280
4. Sequoia Valley (north of Panoramic Highway)	Thursday Aug. 22, 1985 Saturday Aug. 24, 1985 Sunday Aug. 25, 1985	NB & SB-3,110 NB & SB-4,140 NB & SB-4,990
5. Panoramic Highway (south of Muir Woods Road)	Saturday Aug. 17, 1985 Sunday Aug. 18, 1985	SB-1,410 NB-2,690 SB-2,050 NB-3,250
6. Miller Avenue (between Camino Alto & Almonte)	Wednesday Sept. 10, 1986	WB-10,410 EB-10,650
7. Shoreline Highway (south of Loring Avenue)	Saturday Aug. 2, 1986 Sunday Aug. 10, 1986	EB-5,740 WB-6,180 EB-6,080 WB-5,930
8. Almonte Boulevard (just north of State Route 1)	Wednesday June 5, 1985	NB-10,210 SB-9,360
9. Shoreline Highway (east of Almonte Boulevard)	Thursday July 31, 1986 Sunday Aug. 10, 1986	EB-15,450 WB-15,800 EB-13,930 WB-15,400

**Sources:** Caltrans  
Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.

A summary of the data at these nine locations is as follows (more detailed information is provided in the Appendix):

1. Camino Alto (between Vasco and Overhill), has a fairly even flow of north and southbound traffic until 3 PM. From 3 PM to 9 PM, the northbound volumes are heavier, and it peaks around 6 PM, indicating heavy northbound commuter traffic in the evening.
2. East Blithedale Avenue (between Sycamore and Carmelita), has an even flow east and westbound until 11 AM. From 11 AM to 7:30 PM, the eastbound movement is heavier, and from 7:30 PM to midnight, the westbound movement is heavier.
3. While Tiburon Boulevard (west of the southbound Highway 101 on-ramp at the Tiburon Blvd. interchange and east of Tower Drive), has a typical westbound peaking pattern for the peak PM commute hours (4 - 6 PM), it does not have a much heavier AM peak eastbound movement than the westbound movement. This indicates that a significant number of drivers use this roadway to come home in the evening and use an alternate route in the morning.
4. Sequoia Valley Road (north of Panoramic Highway), has two-directional counts. The counters were not broken up by direction, so the two directional counts for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday in August 1985 were plotted. Along this road, the weekend recreational traffic is higher than the weekday traffic.
5. Panoramic Highway (south of the Muir Woods Road intersection) has heavier northbound traffic volumes from 8 AM - 4 PM on the weekends. On Sunday evenings there is a higher number of southbound travellers from 4 PM - 9 PM
6. Miller Avenue (between Camino Alto and Almonte Blvd.) has a fairly even travel pattern east and west all day, does have a slightly higher eastbound movement toward Highway 101 in the morning and a higher westbound movement in the evening.

7. Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 (south of Loring Avenue), has a high westbound movement on the weekends in the morning and early afternoon, and a high eastbound movement in the late afternoon. This pattern is largely caused by traffic to and from the recreation areas in West Marin.
8. Almonte Boulevard (just north of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1), has a typical commuting peak with heavy southbound traffic in the morning and heavy northbound traffic in the evening.
9. Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 (east of Almonte Boulevard), has high eastbound volumes. On Thursday, the eastbound volumes are higher than the westbound volumes from 4 PM - 8 PM; the highest volumes are in peak commuting hours of 7 AM - 9 AM. On Saturday the volumes are slightly heavier westbound in the morning and heavier eastbound in the afternoon and evening.

### **Intersection Levels of Service**

The operating conditions of key intersections in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area were evaluated using traditional intersection level of service (LOS) analysis. Peak hour turning movement volumes were obtained from traffic counts conducted in August 1986 and March 1988. Ten intersections were selected for analysis. The first five intersections listed below are signalized and the second five are unsignalized:

1. State Highway 1 and Almonte Boulevard (Tam Junction)
2. Camino Alto and Miller Avenue
3. Elm Avenue and East Blithedale Avenue
4. Camino Alto and East Blithedale Avenue
5. Lomita/Roque Moraes and East Blithedale Avenue
6. La Goma Street and Miller Avenue
7. Sycamore Avenue and East Blithedale Avenue
8. Tower Drive/Kipling Drive and East Blithedale Avenue
9. U.S. 101 (Southbound Ramps) & Shoreline Highway/State Route 1
10. U.S. 101 (Northbound Ramps) & Pohono Street

The turning movement count locations are shown in **Figure 4.3**





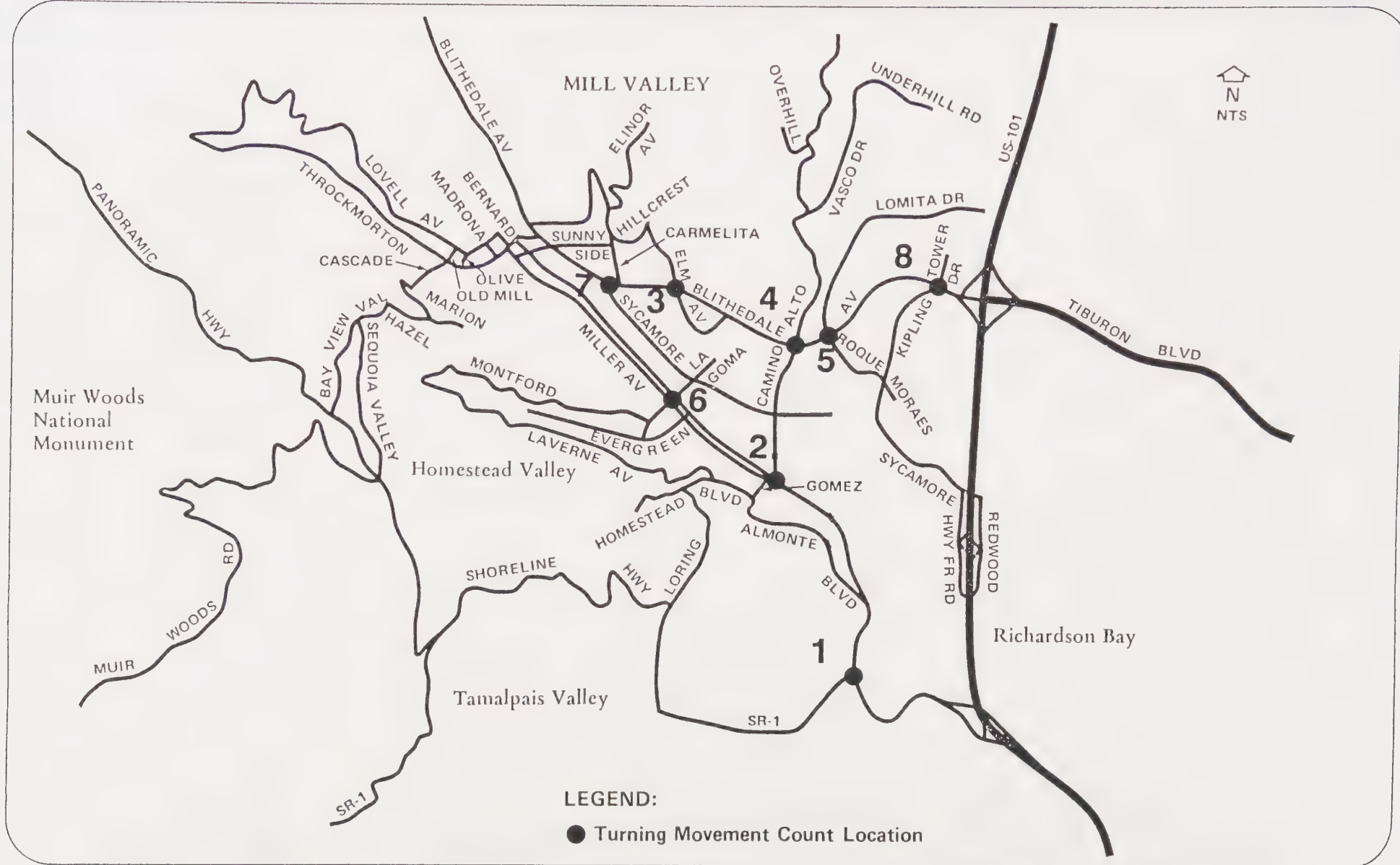


Figure 4.3

## TURNING MOVEMENT COUNT LOCATIONS





Level of service analysis describes the operations of an intersection by comparing volumes of critical movements to theoretical intersection capacity. Level of service can range from A, representing free-flowing conditions, to F, representing very severe congestion and intersection breakdown. The various levels of service and their descriptions are presented in **Table 4.2**.<sup>1</sup> The results are presented in **Table 4.3** and also shown in **Figure 4.4**. In most Bay Area communities, LOS D is considered to be acceptable during peak commute hours. All signalized intersections, except Almonte and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, are operating at LOS C or better.

The four-way STOP intersection of La Goma and Miller was analyzed using the TRB Circular 212 Planning Method for four-way stop intersections. This intersection currently operates at LOS C.

The other unsignalized intersections were analyzed for each movement on each approach. The unsignalized intersection of East Blithedale and Sycamore functions well. The north approach, which is a driveway to an apartment complex, had only one vehicle in the peak hour, but because of the volumes on East Blithedale, it is at LOS D. Overall, the intersection functions adequately.

The intersection of East Blithedale and Tower/Kipling has LOS E and F for the north and south approaches respectively, and LOS E for the east approach left turns. These delays are due to large volumes of traffic on East blithedale and insufficient gaps for vehicles to complete turning movements without waiting.

Intersection 9, the intersection of U.S. 101 (off-ramps from southbound traffic) and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 is commonly referred to as the “Manzanita Intersection”. It has a unique design and method of traffic control (**Figure 4.5**). Vehicles on this approach are required to stop at the intersection before turning right or left. Over 90 percent of the northbound traffic turns left. Over 90 percent of the vehicles turn left toward Tam Junction.

---

1 There are several methods to calculate intersection level of service. The Transportation Research Board (TRB) Circular 212 Planning Method was used for the signalized intersections in this study. This method is a critical movement method in which the sum of the critical volumes is divided by the capacity of the intersection. The unsignalized intersections were analyzed using the 1985 Highway Capacity Manual - Unsignalized Intersection Capacity Method.

**TABLE 4.2**  
**INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS**

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>V/C Ratio</u>
A	Uncongested operations; all queues clear in a single signal cycle.	Less than 0.600
B	Very light congestion; an occasional approach phase is fully utilized.	0.600 - 0.699
C	Light congestion; occasional backups on critical approaches	0.700 - 0.799
D	Significant congestion on critical approaches but intersection functional. Cars required to wait through more than one cycle during short peaks. No long-standing queues formed.	0.800 - 0.899
E	Severe congestion with some long-standing queues on critical approaches. Blockage of intersection may occur if traffic signal does not provide for protected turning movements. Traffic queue may block nearby intersection(s) upstream of critical approach(es).	0.900 - 0.999
F	Total breakdown, stop-and-go operation.	1.000 and greater

V/C Ratio: Volume-to-Capacity Ratio



**TABLE 4.3**  
**EXISTING INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE**

<u>Intersection</u>	<u>LOS</u>	<u>V/C</u>
<u>Signalized Intersections</u>		
1. Almonte & Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 (Tam Junction)	D	0.87
2. Camino Alto & Miller	A	0.59
3. Elm & East Blithedale	A	0.47
4. Camino Alto & East Blithedale	C	0.70
5. Lomita/Roque Moraes & East Blithedale	A	0.57
<u>Unsignalized Intersections</u>		
6. La Goma & Miller (4-way Stop)	C	
7. Sycamore & East Blithedale		
Sycamore - North Approach	D*	
Sycamore - South Approach	B*	
East Blithedale - East Approach Left Turns	A*	
East Blithedale - West Approach Left Turns	A*	
8. Tower/Kipling & East Blithedale		
Tower - North Approach	F*	
Kipling - South Approach	E*	
East Blithedale - East Approach Left Turns	E*	
East Blithedale - West Approach Left Turns	D*	
9. U.S. 101 (SB Ramps) & S.R. 1		
U.S. 101 (SB Ramps) - South Approach	F*	
S.R. 1 - East Approach Left Turns	A*	
10. U.S. 101 (NB Ramps) & Pohono		
Pohono - East Approach	D*	
U.S. 101 (NB Ramps) - North Approach Left Turns	C*	

LOS = Level of Service

V/C = Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

\* These level of service values are an estimate of total average vehicular delay at the intersection.



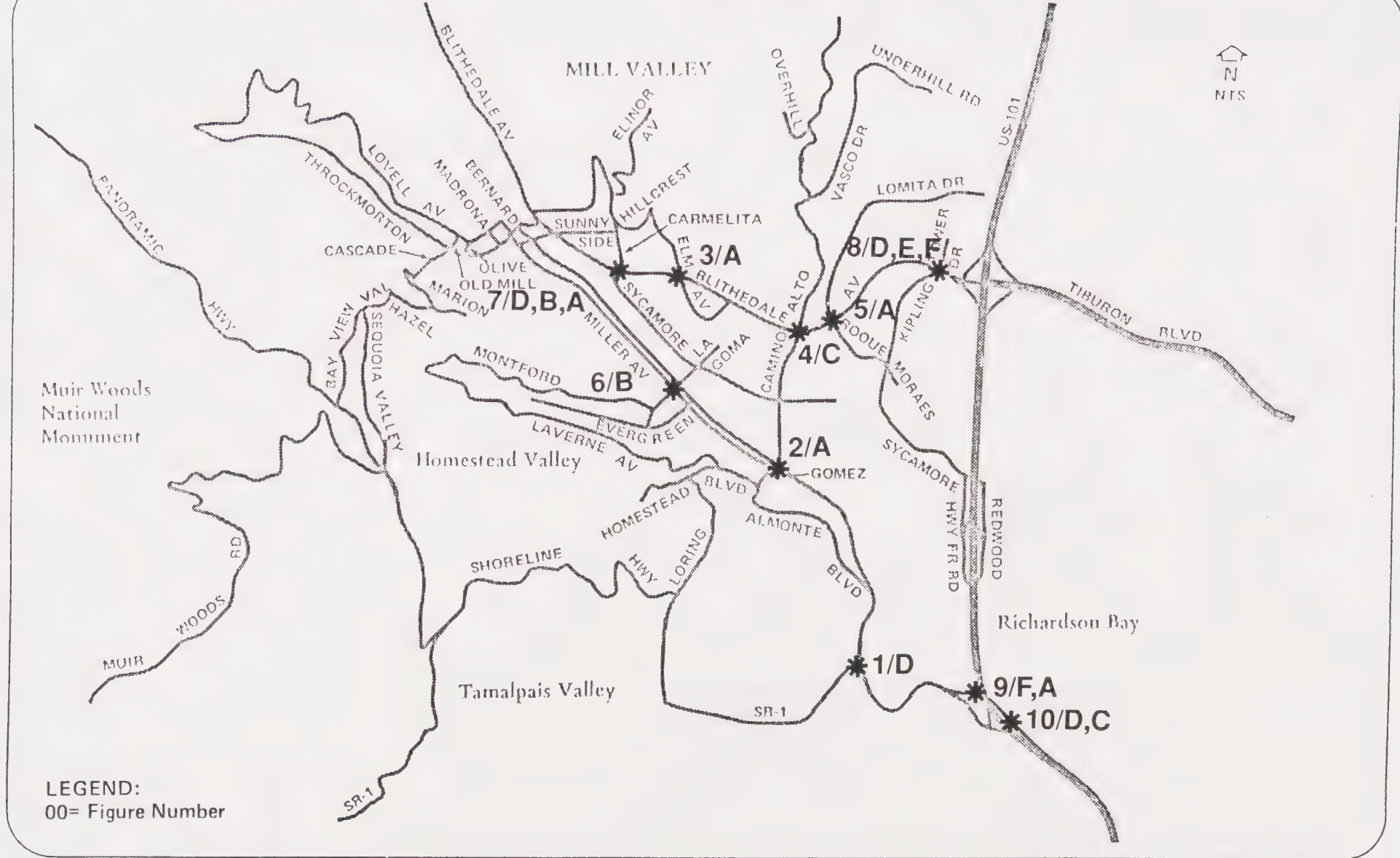


Figure 4.4

## INTERSECTION LEVELS OF SERVICE EXISTING PM PEAK HOUR





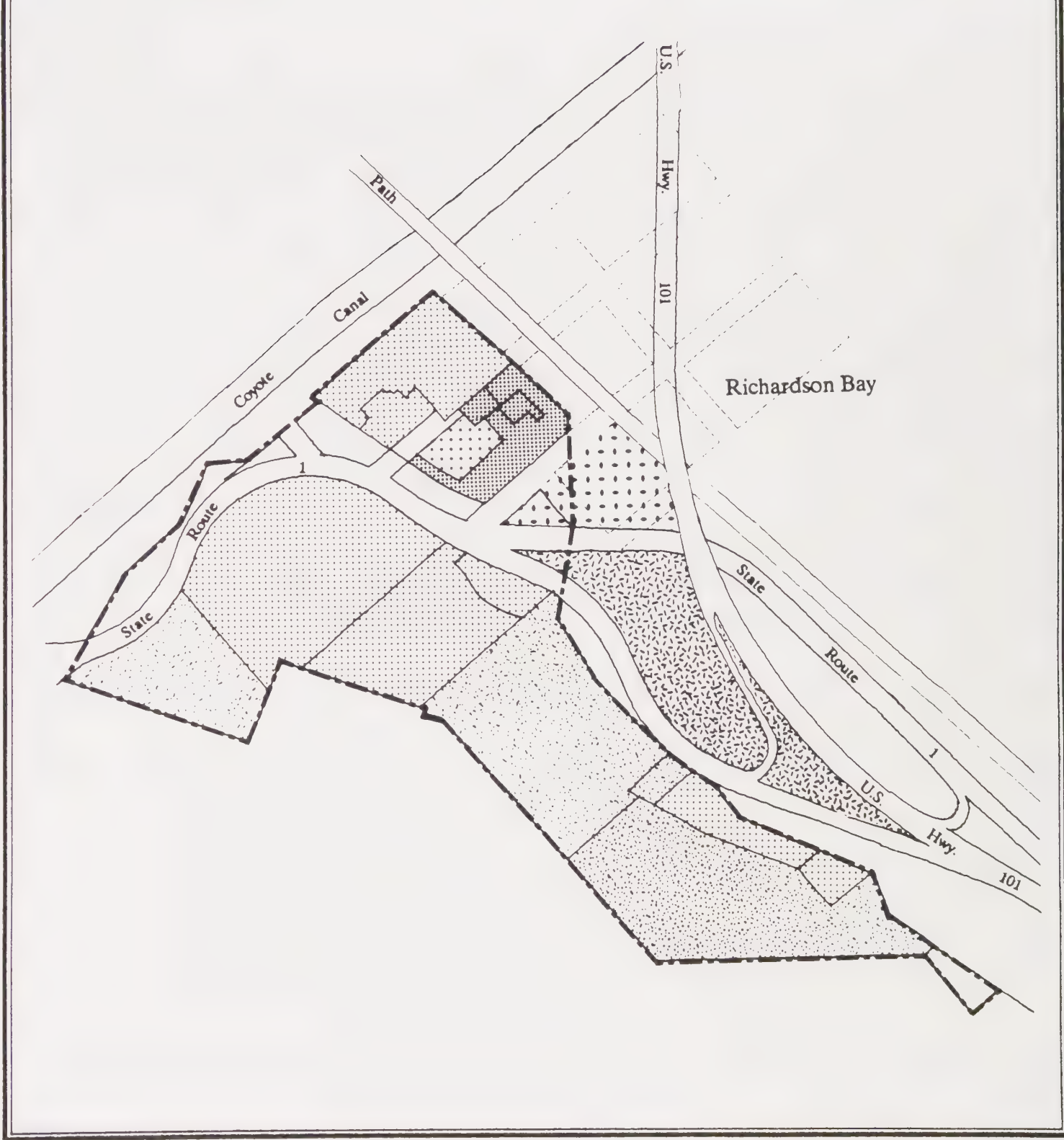








Figure 4.5

# Manzanita

## Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates

- |  |                  |   |                        |
|--|------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Motel/Restaurant |  | Caltran's Service Yard |
|  | Gas Station      |  | Commuter Parking       |
|  | Office           |  | Vacant/Open Space      |





Once vehicles turn left they have a ±200-foot lane on Shoreline Highway before they are required to merge with other through traffic. This approach operates at LOS F. Vehicles coming from either the U.S. 101 northbound off-ramps or the Shoreline Area (via Pohono Street) arrive at the intersection travelling westbound. These vehicles are not required to stop, but do merge with the traffic turning from the other approach. It operates at LOS A.

The other half of the U.S. 101 and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 interchange lies east of the mainline 101 and includes the northbound on- and off-ramps. Vehicles traveling on this highway segment are affected by vehicles turning into and out of the Shoreline area at Pohono Street. For the north approach, left-turn movements operate at LOS C. For the Pohono Street or east approach, left turns from Pohono Street operate at LOS D.

### **Perceived Problems**

During the plan revision process, several perceived problems with the existing roadway network were identified. The problems were mentioned in Section 4.2 and are detailed below:

1. Excessive congestion and delay at the following intersections:
  - Almonte Boulevard and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 (Tam Junction)
  - Camino Alto and East Blithedale Avenue
  - Tower Drive/Kipling Drive and East Blithedale Avenue
  - U.S. 101 (Southbound Ramps) and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1
  - U.S. 101 (Northbound Ramps) and Pohono Street
  - Other minor streets and roads intersecting East Blithedale Avenue (e.g., Sycamore, Nelson, Mesa, and Carmelita) and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1(e.g., Tennessee Valley Road and Flamingo Road).
2. Severe traffic congestion on weekends along Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 between U.S. 101 and the Stinson Beach, Muir Woods, Point Reyes and Mt. Tamalpais recreation areas.
3. The narrowing of the roadway on East Blithedale Avenue, from Lomita to Ashford, and on Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 from U.S. 101 to Tam Junction. (Numerous, unrestricted driveways and on-street parking also contribute to traffic congestion in Tam Junction.)

4. By using local and collector streets rather than arterial streets, through and commuter traffic tends to be routed through some residential streets, such as Sycamore and Nelson, and also causes delays on major streets where left turns are necessary to reach the local streets.

Excessive congestion at key intersections in the study area is not only a common complaint of local residents, but in many cases can be substantiated by data collected for this Plan. Projected traffic congestions, based on buildout of the Mill Valley and Tamalpais Planning Area is discussed, in detail, in Section 4.4.

In some cases, the physical characteristics of the existing roadway system contribute to excessive congestion. For example, the two-lane roadway of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 causes severe traffic congestion at intersections 10 (Pohono Street), 9 (Manzanita) and at Tam Junction (Intersection 1). While the roadway could physically be widened at each of these intersections, the Coyote Creek bridge, a narrow two-lane bridge located in the center of this area, has limited ability to be widened and is an obstacle to fully remedying this condition.

Likewise, Intersection 10 (Pohono Street at the Shoreline Area) is located fairly close to the on-ramps of Bridgeway Boulevard from Sausalito onto U.S. 101. congestion at Intersection 10 can cause traffic to back up onto U.S. 101 and block traffic attempting to enter the freeway. Without closure or reconfiguration of Intersection 1, this condition is difficult to remedy.

The narrowing of the roadway on East Blithedale Avenue from four to two lanes lies between four-lane cross sections at the Lomita/Roque Moraes intersection and the Ashford intersection. To the east of this second intersection is the U.S. 101 and East Blithedale/Tiburon Blvd. interchange. Traditional traffic engineering standards would recommend a continuous four-lane segment along East Blithedale Avenue, from the U.S. 101 interchange to Camino Alto. However, the steep hillside on the south side of East Blithedale Avenue and the creek on the north make widening the roadway difficult and expensive and raises a number of environmental issues.



As commute traffic has increased on East Blithedale, questions have arisen as to why people choose to use East Blithedale, which is a two lane road, over Miller Avenue, which is four lanes. To determine the reason for this pattern, a travel time survey was conducted to determine actual commute period travel times using various routes. Seven different routes between Mill Valley City Hall and the U.S. 101/Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 interchange were studied. The survey findings indicate that the arterial street route using Miller Avenue, Almonte Boulevard, and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 is the optimum route. In terms of distance it has the fastest travel times during both morning and evening periods. Based on this time-travel study, it cannot be determined why residents choose one route over another, even if it is not the fastest route.

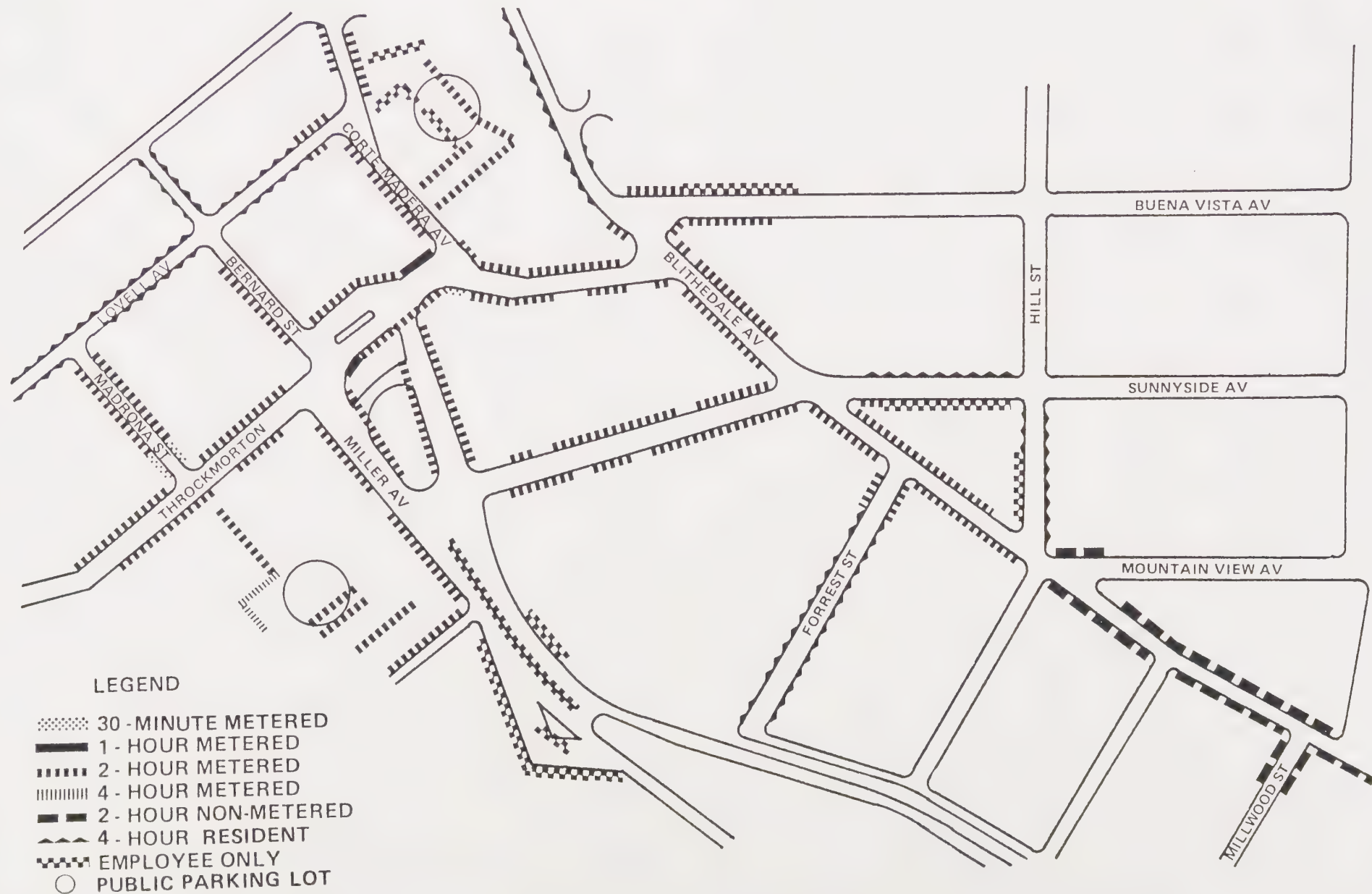
#### **4.3.2 Parking**

The parking analysis for this Plan focused primarily on three parking issues: parking in the downtown area, park-and-ride lots designed to serve commuter travel, and parking on residential streets. **Figure 4.6** indicates the parking areas in the downtown area.

The Mill Valley downtown parking area contains four parking categories:

1. Public parking lots (metered) - public parking lots with metered lengths from two to four hours. There are two public parking lots in the downtown area with a total of 152 spaces.
2. Metered on-street parking - on-street parking with meter lengths from 30 minutes to two hours. There are 234 metered on-street parking spaces in the downtown area.
3. Employee parking - located downtown and marked with an employee parking sign. Employee parking areas are enforced from 8 AM to 6 PM, and employee permits may be obtained from the Chamber of Commerce. There are 123 employee parking spaces in the downtown area.
4. Residential parking - located on residential streets. A residential parking permit may be purchased from the Public Works Department at City Hall, the Library, or the Police Department. If a permit is not obtained, then from 9 AM to 6 PM, a person can park for only four hours. There are 136 residential on-street parking spaces in the downtown area.





MILL VALLEY DOWNTOWN PARKING PLAN

Figure 4.6





Outside the downtown area, there are three designated commuter park-and-ride lots:

1. Miller Avenue (northside), directly opposite Evergreen Avenue. This lot has 39 spaces.
2. Manzanita lot near the U.S. 101 and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 southbound off- and on-ramps. There are 303 spaces at this lot, which is owned and operated by Caltrans.
3. A parking lot inside the Redwood Highway Frontage Road interchange.

Parking usage at the first two of these facilities was estimated by conducting a parking survey on Tuesday, August 26, 1986. The survey monitored the number of spaces occupied every hour from 10 AM to 4 PM. The results of this survey are represented in **Table 4.4**. **Figure 4.7** shows the location and capacity of the commuter lots.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the parking usage survey:

1. The peak time period for parking usage in downtown Mill Valley is around the lunch period, from 10 AM to 2 PM.
2. Residential on-street parking is 93 percent utilized, which approaches theoretical capacity. However, for the most part, this parking is for long term use and a 93 percent peak usage rate is considered acceptable.
3. Employee parking is also for long-term use and the 77 percent peak usage rate is considered acceptable.
4. The metered on-street parking in downtown Mill Valley is mostly for short-term use. The peak usage rate of 82 percent is considered at capacity. Increased development in the downtown area, or more intense use of existing development, would generate additional parking demand. Therefore, in order to maintain the same level of service, or to improve parking availability, additional parking spaces would be needed.

**TABLE 4.4**  
**PARKING USAGE**

<u>Type of Parking</u>	<u>No. of Spaces</u>	<u>Peak Usage (%)</u>	
<u>Downtown Area</u>			
Metered On-Street	234	191	82%
Metered Public Lots	152	104	68%
Residential On-Street	136	126	93%
Employee	123	<u>95</u>	77%
Downtown Sub-total	645	516	80%
<u>Commuter Lots</u>			
Miller & Evergreen	39	31	79%
Manzanita Lot, near U.S. 101	<u>303</u>	<u>354</u>	117%
Commuter Lot Sub-total	342	385	113%

---

Note: Redwood Highway Frontage Road spaces were not counted but appear to be used to capacity.

Sources: Mill Valley Parking Plan.  
Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., Parking Survey conducted on Tuesday, August 26, 1986.

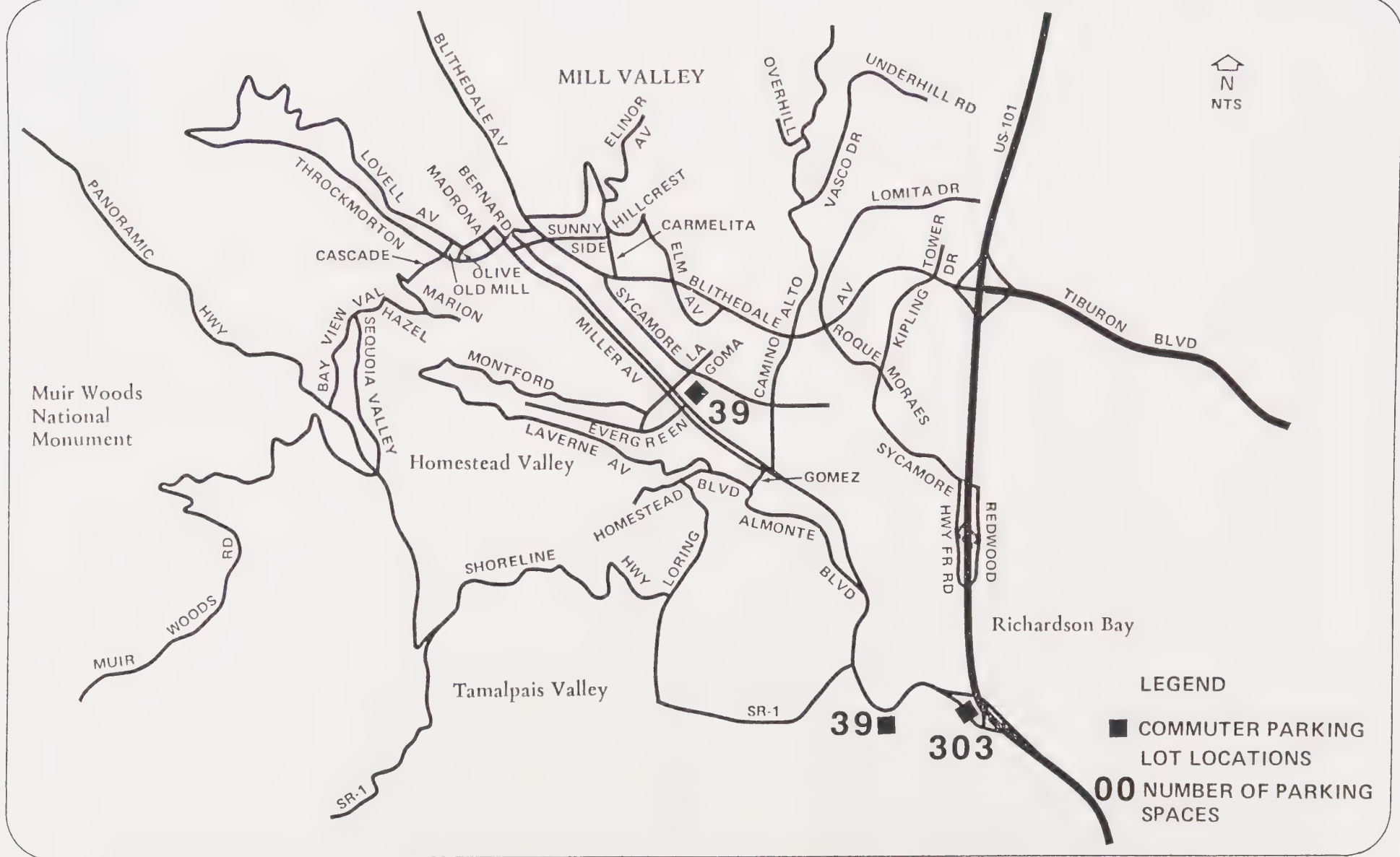


Figure 4.7

## COMMUTER PARKING LOTS







5. Commuter parking lots as a group were over capacity; 385 vehicles occupied 342 spaces, a 113% peak usage rate. The overflow of vehicles parked in unmarked locations in the lots and on the surrounding streets. This indicates a serious shortage of commuter parking spaces.

Another issue is the parking of vehicles on narrow and/or steep residential streets. This poses two safety problems: 1) residential traffic flow is impeded, and 2) emergency vehicle access can be blocked. These problems are most critical on streets and roads in the hillside areas, where often the roadway width is very narrow. Vehicles parked on the shoulder or the roadway in these areas often reduce the effective width of the roadway to one travel lane. Enforcement of parking regulations is the key element in solving this problem, but also the supply of off-street residential parking appears to be too low. While parking surveys of selected residential streets were not conducted, reports from residents, City of Mill Valley staff, and Marin County staff indicate that the residential on-street parking problem is most severe on some of the residential streets close to the downtown area in Mill Valley and in the hillside portions of the Tamalpais Planning Area.

#### **4.3.3 Transit**

The Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area is served by Golden Gate Transit. Nine routes serve the area: Route 10 is a basic Route, Route 4 is a commute route, Routes 3 and 5 are ferry feeder routes, Route 21 is a local route, Routes 7, 43, and 47 are supplemental local routes on school days, and Route 63 is a supplemental weekend route. **Table 4.5** presents a description of these Golden Gate routes and their hours of service.

Ridership on Routes 4, 7, 10, 43, and 47 declined for the period July to December, 1986, verses 1987, and increased on Routes 21 and 63. In July, 1987, local Route 21 was extended south to downtown Mill Valley and shortened on its north end to terminate at the College of Marin. A significant increase in ridership helped improve the performance of this route.

**TABLE 4.5**  
**TRANSIT ROUTES PROVIDED BY GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT**

<b>Route No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Hours of Service</b>	
		<b>Weekdays Except Holidays</b>	<b>Weekends and Holidays</b>
3	Ferry feeder serving Tamalpais Valley, Marin City and Sausalito Ferry Terminal	7:00 am and 8:00 am	---
4	Commute route serving Mill Valley Tamalpais Valley, and San Francisco	6:00 - 9:00 am, 3:30 - 6:45 pm	---
5	Ferry Feeder serving Strawberry, Mill Valley and Sausalito Ferry Terminal	7:00 am, 8:00 am, 6:00 pm	---
10	Basic route serving Tiburon, Mill Valley, Marin City, Sausalito, and San Francisco	5:00 am to 12:01 am	5:45 am to 12:01 am
21	Local bus route serving Kentfield, Corte Madera, Strawberry, and Mill Valley	8:00 am to 5:45 pm	---
7	Supplemental local route serving Sausalito, Marin City, Mill Valley and Tiburon	7:30 am, 7:45 am, 2:45 pm	---
43	Supplemental local route serving Sausalito, Marin City, Tamalpais Valley, and Mill Valley	7:30 am, 3:15 pm	---
47	Supplemental local route serving Terra Linda, San Rafael, Greenbrae, Kentfield, Corte Madera, and Mill Valley	7:00 - 8:00 am, 3:15 - 4:15 pm	---
63	Supplemental weekend route serving Marin City, Tamalpais Junction, Mt. Tamalpais, Stinson Beach, Audubon Canyon Ranch	---	8:45 am - 6:00 pm

**Source:** Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, November 1, 1987.

#### **4.3.4 Bikeways and Urban Trails**

The current Mill Valley Bikeways Plan is shown in **Figure 4.8**. Urban trails are discussed in the Open Space portion of the Land Use Section. The plan includes bike paths on dedicated right-of-way, bike routes which are signed on public streets, and bike lanes, which are designated by lane markings on pavement as well as signs on public streets. The bikeway network provides access to most educational and civic institutions, and to the various commercial and retail establishments in Mill Valley. However, two major areas of activity are not included in the Bikeways Plan -- Tam Junction and East Blithedale Avenue. On these roadways bicycles must share the pavement with autos and trucks. Because the majority of East Blithedale is a narrow roadway, it is not a designated bicycle route.

#### **4.3.5 Truck Routes**

Mill Valley truck routes provide access to downtown Mill Valley via Miller Avenue and to businesses in the Alto Center area via Camino Alto and East Blithedale Avenue. Large trucks are prohibited from using East Blithedale from Camino Alto to the downtown area. **Figure 4.9** indicates the truck routes.

### **4.4 FUTURE CONDITIONS**

#### **4.4.1 Roadway Network and Service Capacity**

The buildout potential identified in this Plan and the Tamalpais Planning Area Plan would add traffic to the existing roadway network and will impact key intersections in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. Traffic volume estimates included in this section are based on proposed land uses and their location. Future intersection levels of service and roadway average daily traffic volumes are forecast and possible solutions for congested locations are presented.

#### **Traffic Generated by Residential and Commercial Development**

**Table 4.6** lists the number of single-family and multi-family residential units and the number of square feet of commercial space which are estimated for complete buildout under the Plan policies. At ultimate buildout, the Tamalpais Planning Area is expected to generate a total of 985 new dwelling units and the City of Mill Valley could generate 390 new dwelling units. The areas expected to have the greatest amount of new commercial space are the Shoreline Center area (82,400 square feet) and Tam Junction area (57,900 square feet) (see **Table 4.7**).

**TABLE 4.6**  
**PLANNING AREA BUILD-OUT (FUTURE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Residential Units</u>		<u>Commercial</u>
	<u>S.F.</u>	<u>M.F.</u>	<u>Square Feet</u>
<u>Mill Valley Neighborhoods:</u>			
Blithedale Canyon	49	10	0
Cascade Canyon	98	10	0
Miller Avenue/Molino	17	18	4,000
Enchanted Knolls/Eucalyptus	25	11	30,000
Knolls/Bayfront			
Scott Valley/Alto Bowl	26	5	5,000
Warner Canyon/Kite Hill	58	7	0
Sycamore/Tamalpais Park/ Central Triangle	3	8	0
Downtown	0	15	6,000
Below Market Rate(BMR) Housing			
- Project(s)/Site(s) to be selected	<u>0</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>
Sub-Total	276	114	45,000
<u>Tamalpais Planning Area Neighborhoods:</u>			
Tamalpais Valley	431	44	0
Almonte	84	9	5,100
Homestead Valley	218	22	0
Manazanita	0	0	0
Muir Woods Park	159	17	0
Shoreline Center Area	0	0	82,400 *
Tam Junction	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>57,900</u>
Sub-Total	892	92	145,400
Total	1,168	206	190,400

Notes:

S.F. - Single-family dwelling unit  
M.F. - Multi-family dwelling unit

\* Commercial square footage for the Shoreline Center Area is based on estimates for a Research Institute with offices and guest rooms (21,000 square feet), a 72-room hotel with a restaurant, and 19,400 square feet of office space/health club.



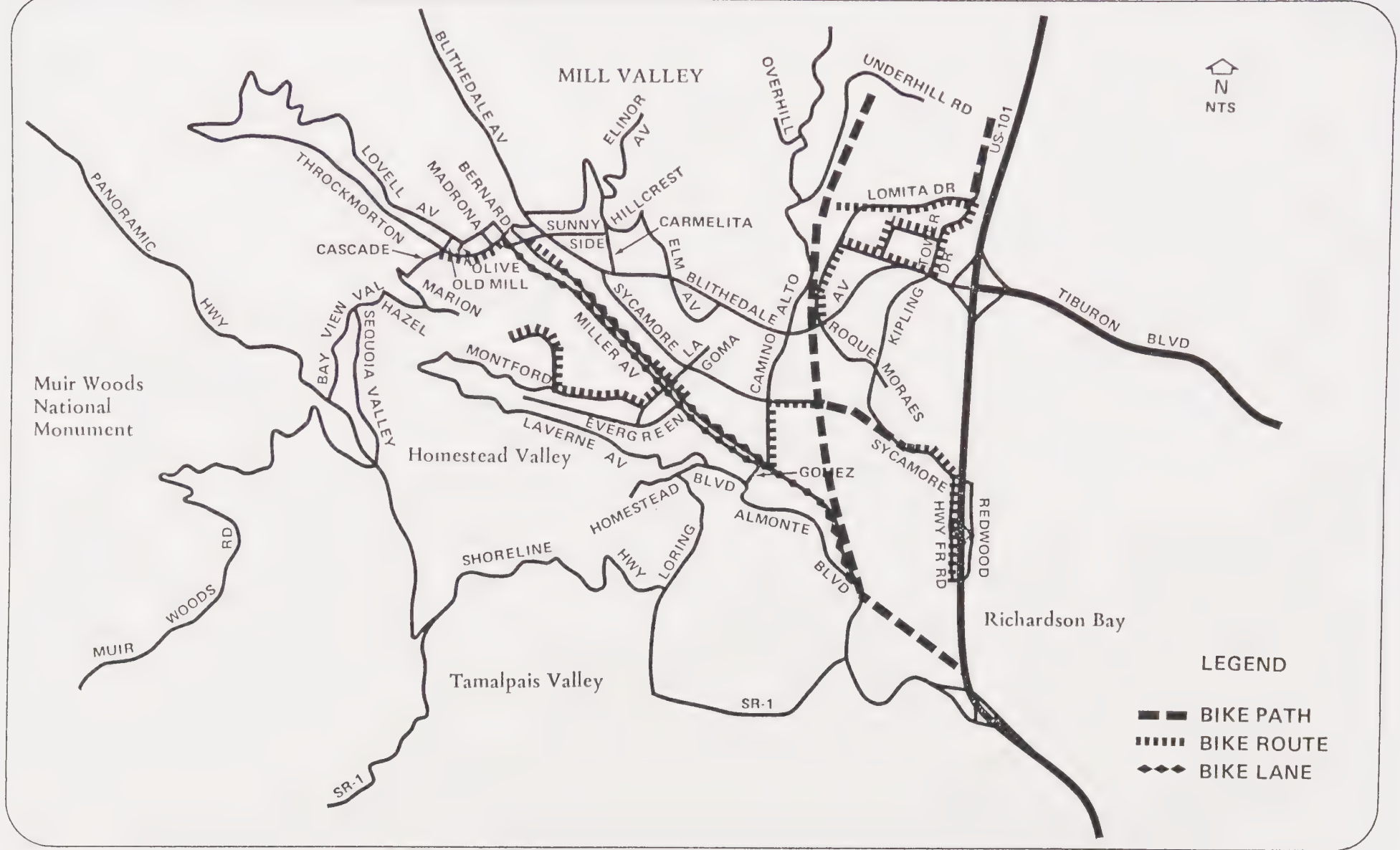
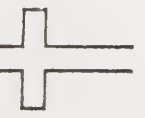


Figure 4.8

# MILL VALLEY BIKEWAYS PLAN (1982)











For purposes of traffic analysis, the worst-case traffic conditions are evaluated during the evening (PM) peak hour. The number of new vehicle trips during the PM peak hour has been estimated using standard trip generation rates and are listed in **Table 4.7**. As shown in **Table 4.7**, a total of 2,590 new PM peak-hour trips would be generated by buildout -- 1,312 residential trips, and 1,278 commercial trips. **Table 4.8** presents PM peak-hour trips generated for each planning area neighborhood.

A “trip” is a one-way journey from one location to another for a single purpose. If the journey includes more than one purpose, then each purpose is counted as a separate trip. For example, if a person travels in an automobile from home to work and stops to shop along the way, this would be counted as two (or possibly more) trips. One trip is from home to the shopping area, a second trip is from the shopping area to work. If the person shopped at several stores, then each store visited would be counted as a separate trip. However, for traffic analysis purposes, vehicle trips are the primary concern. So in the example above, unless the person used a vehicle for shopping at the different stores, there are only two vehicle trips.

Estimates for the Shoreline Center area are derived from the Shoreline Master Plan and Development Guidelines. The recommended plan allows an Educational Research Institute with office and guest room facilities (21,000 square feet), a 72-room hotel (42,000 square feet), and a 19,400 square foot health club and spa. Trip generation estimates indicate that this scenario would generate 198 additional PM peak-hour trips.

### **Trip Distribution and Assignment**

Trip patterns in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area are strongly oriented to U.S. 101, which is the only connection to the rest of the San Francisco Bay metropolitan area. This is especially true for home-to-work and work-to-home trips, which occur disproportionately during the AM and PM peak travel periods. Trips to and from commercial areas (including retail, office, and other uses) are more likely to be trips with both an origin and destination within the planning area.

**TABLE 4.7**  
**TRIP GENERATION SUMMARY FOR FUTURE MILL VALLEY AND TAMALPAIS**  
**PLANNING AREA BUILDOUT**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Units/Area</u>	<u>PM Peak Hour Trip Rate*</u>	<u>In/Out Distribution</u>	<u>Total PM Peak Hour Trips</u>
Single-Family Residential	1,168 d.u.	1.00	63%/37%	1,168
Multi-Family Residential	206 d.u.	0.70	63%/37%	144
Mill Valley Commercial Areas (office, retail, etc.)	45,000 s.f.	10.00	50%/50%	450
Tam Junction Commercial Area	57,900 s.f.	10.00	50%/50%	579
Shoreline Center Area:				
-Research Institute/ Office/Guest Rooms	21,000 s.f.	12.50/2.91/.66	75%/25%	94
-72-Room Hotel	42,000 s.f.	0.66	54%/46%	48
-Office/Health Club	19,400 s.f.	2.91	16%/84%	56
Sub-Total				198
Almonte Junction Commercial Area	5,100 s.f.	10.00	50%/50%	51
Total				2,590

Notes:

- \* Trip rates are per dwelling unit for residential uses, per room for the hotel use, and per thousand square feet for all other uses.

**Sources:** City of Mill Valley, Marin County, EDAW and DKS.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, Trip Generation, 4th Edition, 1987.

Geral Salzman, "Hotel Parking: How Much is Enough?," Urban Land, January 1988.

**TABLE 4.8**  
**TRIP GENERATION - PM PEAK HOUR (PROJECTED IN ADDITION TO EXISTING)**

	<u>Residential Based Trips</u>	<u>Commercial Based Trips</u>	<u>Total Trips</u>
<u>Mill Valley Neighborhoods:</u>			
Blithedale Canyon	56	0	56
Cascade Canyon	105	0	105
Miller Avenue/Molino	30	40	70
Enchanted Knolls/Eucalyptus	33	300	333
Knolls/Bayfront			
Scott Valley/Alto Bowl	31	50	81
Warner Canyon/Kite Hill	63	0	63
Sycamore/Tamalpais Park/ Central Triangle	9	0	9
Downtown	11	60	71
Below Market Rate(BMR) Housing - Project(s)-Location(s) to be selected	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>21</u>
Sub-Total	359	450	809
<u>Tamalpais Planning Area Neighborhoods:</u>			
Tamalpais Valley	462	0	462
Almonte	90	51	141
Homestead Valley	233	0	233
Manzanita	0	0	0
Muir Woods Park	171	0	171
Shoreline Center Area	0	198	198
Tam Junction	<u>0</u>	<u>579</u>	<u>579</u>
Sub-Total	956	828	1,784
Total	1,315	1,278	2,593

Sources: City of Mill Valley, Marin County and EDAW

Travel-demand estimates produced by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) for the year 2005 indicate that the majority of Mill Valley resident workers (52 percent) will travel to jobs south of the Mill Valley “superdistrict”. (The MTC defines the Mill Valley “superdistrict” as Mill Valley, Sausalito and Marin City.) In contrast, the majority of workers at jobs in Mill Valley (56 percent) will come from residences north of Mill Valley.

Based on these forecasts, the forecasts from the 101 Corridor Study, and the development patterns existing now and projected by buildout, trip distribution forecasts were made. The trip distribution forecasts were then used to assign the new trips generated by buildout to the area street and road system.

### **Future Travel Demand**

Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes were estimated using existing ADT volumes and existing and future peak-hour intersection turning movement volumes. The resulting General Plan buildout daily traffic volumes are generally only 15 to 30 percent higher than existing ADT volumes (see **Table 4.9**). However, for Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 the estimates of future weekday traffic are approximately 40 percent greater than existing traffic volumes. Volumes are estimated to increase from 31,000 to 44,000 two-way ADT. In order to maintain or improve traffic flow, Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 would have to be widened to four lanes from the U.S. 101 interchange to Flamingo Road, west of Tam Junction.

### **Impact on Intersection Levels of Service**

The trip generation and assignment process resulted in projected traffic volumes at the ten study intersections with Planning Area buildout. Level of service (LOS) analysis was conducted for both signalized and unsignalized intersections. The results of these analyses are presented in **Table 4.10** and **Figure 4.10**.

The Tam Junction (Almonte Boulevard and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 intersection) currently operates at LOS D during the PM peak hour; with buildout it would degrade to LOS F resulting in operational breakdown of the intersection. The addition to over 1,300 PM peak-hour trips to this already congested intersection would result in very long delays, exceeding the capacity of the intersection by 45 percent. To provide LOS D operations



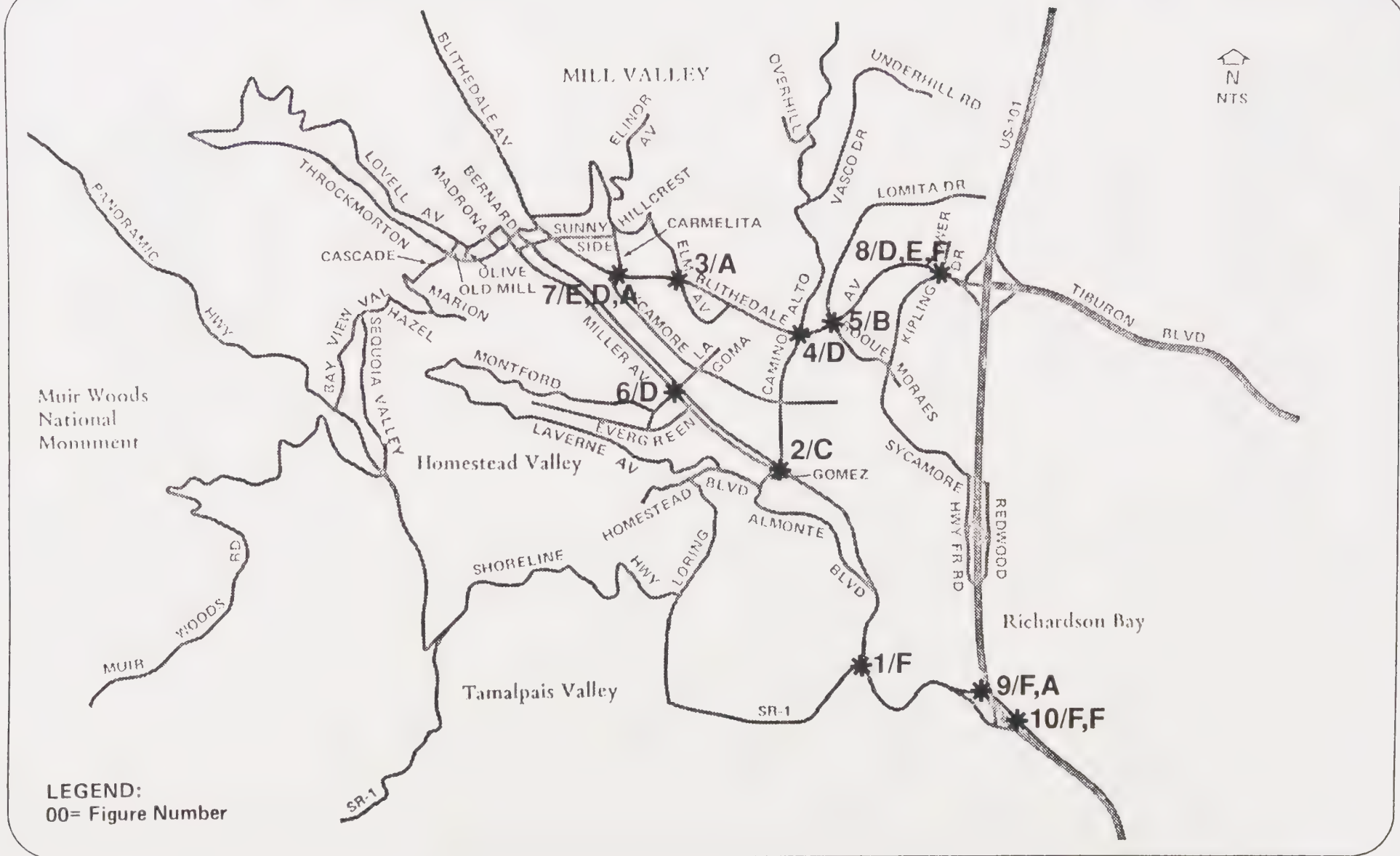


Figure 4.10

# **INTERSECTION LEVELS OF SERVICE WITH GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT - PM PEAK HOUR**





**TABLE 4.9**  
**EXISTING AND PLANNING AREA BUILD-OUT**  
**AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ADT) VOLUMES**

<u>Location and Direction</u>	<u>Existing ADT*</u>	<u>ADT with Build-out Scenario 1**</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
1. Camino Alto (between Vasco and Overhill)			
Northbound	2,320	2,700	16%
Southbound	1,580	2,000	27%
2. East Blithedale Avenue (between Sycamore and Carmelita)			
Eastbound	7,790	10,000	28%
Westbound	7,220	9,500	32%
3. Tiburon Boulevard (west of southbound on-ramp to U.S. 101 and east of Tower Drive)			
Eastbound	17,640	21,400	21%
Westbound	20,280	24,800	22%
6. Miller Avenue (between Camino Alto and Almonte)			
Eastbound	10,650	14,100	32%
Westbound	10,410	13,200	27%
8. Almonte Boulevard (north of Shoreline Highway)			
Northbound	10,210	12,900	26%
Southbound	9,360	12,300	31%
9. Shoreline Highway (east of Almonte Boulevard)			
Eastbound	15,450	21,400	39%
Westbound	15,800	22,700	44%

\* See Table 1.

\*\* Forecast Assumptions: ADT with General Plan build-out was forecast using the following formula.

Build-out ADT = (Existing ADT divided by Existing PM peak-hour volume at nearest intersection) multiplied by (build-out, Scenario 1, forecast peak-hour volume at nearest intersection).

**TABLE 4.10**  
**FUTURE INTERSECTION LEVELS OF SERVICE - PM PEAK HOUR**

	<u>LOS</u>	<u>V/C</u>
<u>Signalized Intersections</u>		
1. Almonte & S.R. 1 (Tam Junction)	F	1.37
2. Camino Alto & Miller	C	0.72
3. Elm & Blithedale	B	0.61
4. Camino Alto & Blithedale	D	0.86
5. Lomita/Roque Moraes & Blithedale	B	0.67
<u>Unsignalized Intersections</u>		
6. La Goma & Miller (4-Way Stop)	D	
7. Sycamore & Blithedale		
Sycamore-North Approach	E*	
Sycamore-South Approach	C*	
Blithedale-East Approach Left Turns	A*	
Blithedale-West Approach Left Turns	A*	
8. Tower/Kipling & Blithedale		
Tower-North Approach	F*	
Kipling-South Approach	F*	
Blithedale-East Approach Left Turns	E*	
Blithedale-West Approach left Turns	D*	
9. U.S. 101 (SB Ramps) & S.R. 1		
U.S. 101 (SB Ramp)-South Approach	F*	
S.B. 1-East Approach Left Turns	A*	
10. U.S. 101 (NB Ramps) & Pohono		
Pohono-East Approach	F*	
U.S. 101 (NB Ramp)-North Approach Left Turns	E*	

LOS = Level of Service

V/C = Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

\* These level of service values represent an estimate of total average vehicular delay at the intersection.



**TABLE 4.11**  
**LEVELS OF SERVICE AT CRITICAL LOCATIONS UNDER MITIGATED CONDITIONS -**  
**PM PEAK HOUR**

Intersection and Description of Mitigation Measures	Existing <sup>1</sup>		Future With No Mitigation <sup>2</sup>		Future With Mitigation <sup>3</sup>	
	LOS	V/C	LOS	V/C	LOS	V/C
1. Almonte Boulevard and S.R. 1 (Tam Junction) - Add LT lane to North Approach (Almonte Boulevard) - Add LT lane to East Approach (State Route 1) - Channelize RT lane on East Approach and provide acceleration lane/merge lane on Almonte Boulevard	D	0.87	F	1.41	D/E	0.85
9. U.S. 101 (Southbound Ramps) and S.R. 1 - Signalize with 2-phase traffic control - Widen S.R. 1 to 4 lanes, including LT lane on East Approach from intersection to Coyote Creek Bridge - Add LT lane to South Approach (Southbound off-ramp)	D/E	0.88	F	1.34	C/D	0.80
10. U.S. 101 (Northbound Ramps) and Pohono Street - Signalize with 2-phase traffic control - Widen S.R. 1 to 4 lanes from freeway to Manzanita intersection (U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps are where S.R. 1 splits from U.S. 101 to provide access to west Marin County) - Include LT lane on North Approach, toward Pohono Street - Include RT lane on South Approach, toward Pohono Street	C/D	0.81	F	1.16	B/C	0.70

LOS = Level of Service

V/C = Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

Notes:

- 1 Assumes signalization of intersection, if not already signalized, with existing geometrics and existing traffic volumes.
- 2 Assumes signalization of intersection, if not already signalized, with existing geometrics and future traffic volumes.
- 3 Assumes implementation of mitigation measures described in the table and future traffic volumes under build-out conditions.

at Tam Junction during peak periods, it would be necessary to widen Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 to four lanes, from the bridge crossing of Coyote Creek to Flamingo Road (see **Table 4.11**). Furthermore, additional turning lanes would be required at the intersection. A second left-turn lane would be needed for the north approach (Almonte Boulevard) and the east approach (Shoreline Highway/State Route 1). The existing right-turn lane on the east approach would have to be channelized and the portion of Almonte Boulevard pavement leading toward Mill Valley would have to be widened so that an acceleration lane/merge lane can be provided. If these mitigation measures were implemented at Tam Junction, intersection operations under General Plan buildout conditions would improve from LOS F (volume-to-capacity ratio,  $V/C = 1.41$ ) to LOS D/E ( $V/C = 0.89$ ).

An alternative route to Mill Valley from Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, east of Tam Junction, has been considered before and rejected because of environmental and financial costs. Encouragement of transit usage for journey-to-work trips and for weekend recreational trips has the potential to reduce vehicle trips travelling through the intersection. However, recent travel behavior patterns, based on relatively stable prices for gasoline, do not suggest a large shift from auto to transit, even with transit incentives and the well-known traffic disincentives.

At three other signalized intersections -- Camino Alto & Miller, Elm & East Blithedale, and Lomita/Roque Moraes & East Blithedale -- General Plan buildout would result in acceptable intersection levels of service under either Scenario 1 or 2. All three intersections currently operate at LOS A during the PM peak hour. Under buildout of the Planning Area, Camino Alto & Miller would operate at LOS C, and Elm & East Blithedale and Lomita/Roque Moraes & East Blithedale would operate at LOS B.

The fifth intersection currently signalized is Camino Alto & East Blithedale, which now operates at LOS C during the PM peak hour. Under buildout, this intersection would operate at LOS D, with a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.87. This is at the limit of acceptable intersection operations. The heaviest movements at this intersection are westbound left turns and northbound right turns from Camino Alto onto East Blithedale. Two lanes are provided for each of these movements, and signal phasing permits these two movements to operate simultaneously. Further intersection modifications would require major land acquisition since additional improvements are not possible within the existing right-of-way.

The other five intersections studied are currently unsignalized. Intersection number 6 is La Goma & Miller, which is controlled by all-way STOP signs. This intersection currently operates at LOS C and under future buildout would operate at LOS D. These volumes indicate that traffic signalization should be considered to improve safety and reduce delays at the intersection.

The intersection of Sycamore & East Blithedale is controlled by STOP signs on Sycamore. The major street approaches on East Blithedale now operate at LOS A and would continue to do so under Planning Area buildout. The minor street approaches now operate at LOS D for the north approach and LOS B for the south approach. In the future, LOS would decline to LOS E for the north approach and LOS D for the south approach. Again, future traffic volumes should be monitored, so that traffic signalization can be considered if and when these conditions become excessive or dangerous. Existing and buildout traffic volumes do not indicate sufficient growth of traffic on Sycamore to meet traffic signal warrants. (Traffic signal warrants are California State standards which provide guidelines for traffic volumes, pedestrian volumes, accident experience, or traffic signal progression needs that should be met in order to justify installation of a traffic signal.)

The intersection of Sycamore and East Blithedale is typical of many minor/local streets along East Blithedale Avenue, west of Camino Alto. Substantial traffic volumes flow on East Blithedale Avenue, approximately 15,000 vehicles per day. Access to East Blithedale, especially left turns, requires good visibility and gaps in traffic flow. To reduce delays and improve access from any minor/local street would required traffic control devices, such as STOP signs on East Blithedale, or a traffic signal. While these measures would reduce delays for the minor/local streets, they would increase delays on East Blithedale, the major street. For example, if a simple two-phase traffic signal were installed at the Sycamore and East Blithedale intersection, the intersection would operate at LOS A for both Scenarios 1 and 2 during the PM peak hour. However, average stopped delay for all vehicles would be much greater than under existing traffic control.

Intersection number 8, which is Tower/Kipling and East Blithedale, currently operates at LOS D or worse for both major and minor street approaches. Under future buildout, this intersection would become even more congested: LOS E for east approach (East Blithedale) left turns,



LOS D for west approach left turns, and LOS F for both minor street approaches -- Tower from the north and Kipling from the south. As with the intersection of Sycamore and East Blithedale, existing and buildout traffic volumes do not indicate sufficient growth of traffic on the minor streets, Tower and Kipling, to meet traffic warrants.

Changes at the Tower/Kipling and East Blithedale intersection would decrease delay for some movements and increase delay for others. If the intersection were signalized, it would operate at LOS C/D under either Scenario 1 or 2. If the median on East Blithedale were closed, then left-turn movements to and from Tower Drive and Kipling Drive would be prohibited. This would result in less delay on East Blithedale Avenue but could result in more total delay if U-turns are made downstream by drivers seeking access to Tower or Kipling Drive. A modified median closure could allow left turns from East Blithedale, but not allow left turns from Tower or Kipling Drive to East Blithedale. Future traffic volumes and intersection levels of service should be monitored to determine whether modifications to the intersection should be made. Because the intersection lies partially within the jurisdiction of Mill Valley, Marin County and Tiburon, a cooperative agreement for study and construction of any improvements will be necessary.

The U.S. 101 interchange at Tiburon Boulevard and East Blithedale Avenue is a partial cloverleaf configured interchange, characterized by signalized off-ramp intersections along Tiburon Boulevard. This interchange was included in the study for the Tiburon General Plan - Draft Environmental Impact Report (Tiburon EIR). This interchange currently operates a LOS B at the southbound off-ramp intersection and LOS A at the northbound off-ramp intersection, for both the AM and PM peak hours

Buildout projections for the year 2005 include an annual traffic growth rate of 1.0 percent to account for cumulative development. This growth rate would account for traffic generated by Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area buildout.



Future traffic conditions projected in the Tiburon EIR would cause “significant impacts” (as defined in that document) at the signalized intersection of the interchange. Specifically:

- 1) Drop in LOS from B to E at the U.S. 101 Southbound Off-Ramp and East Blithedale Avenue/Tiburon Boulevard intersection.
- 2) Drop in LOS from A to D at the U.S. Northbound Off-Ramp and Tiburon Boulevard intersection.
- 3) Capacity exceeded on the East Blithedale Avenue/Tiburon Boulevard overcrossing of U.S. 101.

Mitigation measures proposed by the Town of Tiburon in the Tiburon EIR include improvements to the off-ramps and widening the overcrossing. These improvements would reduce the negative impacts caused by Tiburon General Plan buildout and cumulative development. Implementation of these recommended mitigation measures would require cooperation between the Town of Tiburon, Marin County and Caltrans. As general plan buildout proceeds, these mitigation measures will be reviewed for their adequacy and need and will then be considered for programming and funding.

The U.S. 101 interchange at Redwood Highway/Seminary Drive has hook ramps on each side connecting to freeway frontage roads. According to previous studies, the overall existing level of service for the interchange is C/D during peak-hour conditions. However, the level of service at the intersections within the City of Mill Valley is very good, LOS A (R. Harrison, 1985)

Buildout is expected to contribute to increased traffic levels at this interchange, although traffic trips from the Strawberry Peninsula will have a greater effect because all proposed development will utilize this intersection. Based on information which overestimated the development potential of Mill Valley, the overall intersection level of service in the future, without mitigation measures, would drop to F. Within this analysis, the southbound ramps and Hamilton Drive, both within the City of Mill Valley, would remain at LOS A. The level of service on the northbound ramps could be improved to LOS B with roadway widening and reconfiguration.

Ashford Avenue where it intersects with East Blithedale presents the same trade-offs. Access to and from this street could be restricted or a traffic signal could be installed. While restricting left turns would eliminate minor street level of service problems, it would move them somewhere else. It would also improve the major street, East Blithedale Avenue, level of service by eliminating some of the conflicting minor street turning movements. Signalization of minor streets generally improves minor street access and substantially reduces delay, depending on the type of controller used (actuated, semi-actuated, or pre-timed/non-actuated), and the signal phasing plan (simple, two-phase, or separate left-turn phases). However, signalization at these locations may also cause excessive delay for traffic on the major street.

Hamilton Drive is currently a two-lane, one-way westbound roadway from Seaver Drive to the Public Safety Building. From the Public Safety Building to the intersection of Roque Moraes and Kipling Drive, the roadway is two-directional. In December 1984, a traffic study was conducted to determine the impacts of opening the length of Hamilton Drive to two-way traffic (Robert L. Harrison, 1984). It found that under this scenario, traffic would continue to operate at LOS A and that, because travel time would be longer than those along East Blithedale, the roadway was not likely to become a “short cut” for travellers from central Mill Valley to southbound Highway 101.

In September 1987, the Mill Valley City council voted to maintain Hamilton Drive as a one-way street between the Public Safety Building and Seaver Drive. They found that the neighbors had displayed great concern about the safety, traffic and the peace and quiet of their neighborhood, and agreed that it would not be appropriate to consider opening the roadway to two-way traffic.

The last two intersections to be studied are the two unsignalized intersections which control access to and from the U.S. 101 and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 interchange, intersection numbers 9 and 10. The intersections and the ramps which connect to U.S. 101 do not meet current design standards, are confusing to the many new drivers (particularly tourists) who use them, and operate at a poor level of service under existing conditions.

Intersection number 9 -- U.S. 101 (southbound ramps) and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 -- now operates at LOS F for the south approach and LOS A for the east approach left turns. The south approach includes all traffic exiting from southbound 101, which is stopped at a

stop sign-controlled intersection after making a 180-degree turn. The great majority of this traffic turns left toward Mill Valley, Muir Woods, and Mt. Tamalpais. The other traffic turns right toward a park-and-ride lot, the Shoreline Center area, and the northbound 101 on-ramp.

With Planning Area buildout traffic volumes, this unsignalized intersection would still operate at LOS F for the south approach and LOS A for the east approach left turns. Thus, at first glance, there appears to be no discernible difference between existing and buildout conditions.

However, a better indication of buildout impacts is to examine the intersection as if it were signalized. The results of this analysis reveal that under existing PM peak hour conditions the intersection would operate at LOS D, with a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.88. Under buildout traffic conditions the intersection would operate at LOS F, with a volume-to-capacity ratio of 1.35, or 35 percent over theoretical intersection capacity. Redesign, and signalization, of this intersection would be required to achieve an acceptable level of service.

To provide LOS D at this intersection would require: 1) widening of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 to 4-lanes, 2) signalization with two-phase traffic control, 3) a left-turn lane on the east approach, Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, and 4) a second left-turn lane on the south approach, the U.S. 101 southbound off-ramp. With this design, buildout traffic volumes would produce LOS D ( $V/C = 0.84$ ) operations at this intersection (see **Table 4.11**).

Intersection number 10 also serves traffic entering and exiting U.S. 101. The northbound on-ramp and off-ramp would operate smoothly and without conflict except for the local street serving the Shoreline Center -- Pohono Street. Currently Pohono Street operates at LOS D, and the north approach left turns to eastbound Pohono Street operate at LOS C. Excessive delay on the off-ramp, due to turns to and from Pohono Street, often causes traffic to back up onto U.S. 101 and block the Bridgeway on-ramp. As described in Section 4.3.1, these left turns are required to merge with traffic on Shoreline Highway/State Route 1. Through traffic on Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 is not required to stop at this intersection.

Under buildout traffic conditions, both Pohono Street, the east approach, and the north approach left turns to Pohono Street would operate at LOS F. Of particular concern is the potential safety problem caused by high-speed traffic exiting from northbound 101. Turning



movements to and from Pohono Street conflict with this traffic and require sufficient gaps in order to allow turning movements. Therefore, introducing a traffic signal at this location requires carefully weighing the anticipated benefits of less delay and congestion with the potential safety problems.

To provide LOS D at this intersection would require: 1) widening of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, which branches northbound from the U.S. 101 off-ramp, to 4-lanes, 2) signalization with two-phase traffic control, 3) retention of the separate left-turn lane from the north approach, the U.S. 101 northbound on-ramp, and 4) retention of the separate right-turn lane for the south approach, the U.S. 101 northbound off-ramp. With this design, buildout traffic volumes would produce LOS D ( $V/C = 0.83$ ) operations at this intersection (see **Table 4.11**). Site specific studies will be necessary to determine whether these improvements will continue to cause backup onto U.S. 101.

Another potential mitigation for the congestion problems at the two unsignalized intersections controlling access to the U.S. 101 and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 interchange, would be to close Pohono Street and provide access to the Shoreline Center area at a new location. The new location would be directly opposite the U.S. 101 southbound off-ramp at its intersection with Shoreline Highway/State Route 1. Access to the Shoreline Center area would be provided through the Caltrans Manzanita Maintenance Station, assuming Caltrans' approval. This new 4-leg intersection, which will be referred to as Manzanita and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, would operate at LOS B/C ( $V/C = 0.70$ ) if Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 were widened to 4-lanes and the following intersection design were implemented; 1) signalization with 3-phase operation, providing for a left-turn phase for the north and south approaches, and 2) lane configurations as shown below.

	<u>Right Turn</u>	<u>Through</u>	<u>Left Turn</u>
North Approach	0	1(1)	1(1)
East Approach	1(1)	2(1)	0
South Approach	0	1(1)	2(1)
West Approach	0	2(1)	1(1)

(The numbers in parenthesis indicate additional lanes compared with existing conditions.)



Implementation of this intersection design would eliminate all conflicting movements at the U.S. 101 (northbound ramps) and Pohono Street intersection because the source of the conflicts, Pohono Street, has been closed. Pohono Street traffic would be diverted to the new Manzanita and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 intersection. This new intersection would operate at LOS B/C ( $V/C = 0.70$ ) with existing PM peak hour volumes. However, to operate at LOS D for buildout Scenario 1 conditions, the intersection would need the following: 1) a separate right-turn lane and a second left-turn lane on the north approach, 2) a third left-turn lane on the south approach, the U.S. 101 southbound off-ramp, and 3) a wider 3-lane cross-section on Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, which could receive the three lanes of left-turn movements. This 3-lane cross-section could narrow to 2-lanes a few hundred feet west of the intersection. With this design the intersection would operate at LOS D/E ( $V/C = 0.89$ ) during the PM peak hour.

Both alternatives to the U.S. 101 and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 interchange described in this section could operate at LOS D with buildout. Therefore, the recommendation mentioned earlier, on page 42, regarding a planning study for Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, from the U.S. 101 interchange to Tam Junction, should also carefully examine the U.S. 101 and Route 1 interchange design. Improvements to the interchange ramp intersections, the widening of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1, and Tam Junction improvements are related but are not dependent on each other. Any modifications to the existing interchange would require consultation with and approval by Caltrans.

#### **4.4.2 Parking**

Future parking needs have been identified for downtown Mill Valley/Lytton Square and for commuter park-and-ride users. In addition, on-street parking in residential areas with narrow and/or steep roadways, presents safety and accessibility problems.

Within the downtown core area, roughly bounded by Miller Avenue, Throckmorton Avenue, East Blithedale Avenue, and Forrest Street, parking usage is generally at or near capacity. Therefore, any new building developments or increases in the intensity of existing downtown land uses, would require additions to the downtown parking supply. City of Mill Valley parking requirements currently require new (or redeveloped buildings to provide on-site parking, or to

contribute to a fund for additional off-site parking in the downtown core. Although, not a part of the parking survey, the lower Miller Avenue commercial area also has a limited parking supply. The City has recently been considering purchasing property to provide additional off-street parking in that area.

Commuter park-and-ride lots are already over capacity (see **Table 4.4**). Peak usage at the Manzanita Lot near U.S. 101 was 117 percent on the date surveyed. Based on residential buildout of 1,374 dwelling units, a new park-and-ride lot of 100 to 105 parking spaces will be needed. Because the largest park-and-ride lot, the Manzanita Lot, is so close to U.S. 101, it is very likely used by many commuters not residing in Mill Valley or the Tamalpais Planning Area. Therefore, any new park-and-ride lot(s) should be located further away from the freeway, perhaps near Tam Junction or on the north side of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 east of Tam Junction. This would put the new park-and-ride parking spaces closer to Mill Valley and Tamalpais Planning Area residents, and discourage other non-local commuters. Unfortunately, very little undeveloped land is available in the Planning Area which meets this criteria.

The problem of on-street parking in residential areas is most severe in the Tamalpais Planning Area, south of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1. Enforcement of existing parking regulations should be increased. New developments should provide for adequate off-street parking, particularly in hillside areas of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area. Furthermore, Marin County should study the feasibility of providing more off-street parking in residential areas with narrow, steep roadways. This could be done by widening the roadway shoulders, or by purchasing a parcel for a small parking lot near those residential areas where the problem is most severe.

#### **4.4.3 Transit**

The Five-Year Transit Development Plan for Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (1988/89 to 1992/92) discusses the impacts of planned residential growth in their service area. The plan identifies five areas of significant residential growth potential which may generate new ridership for Golden Gate Transit. These areas are: 1) Novato, 2) San Raphael, 3) Lower Ross Valley, Richardson Bay, 4) Sonoma Valley, and 5) East Petaluma and Rohnert Park.

The plan notes that there are five areas in southern and central Marin including Tiburon, Strawberry Point, Mill Valley, Corte Madera and Larkspur (which) have 1,500 (residential) units planned for construction. Although this level of development does not appear to justify new service, it is important to be aware of potential for service expansion in southern Marin.” The five significant residential growth areas listed above are better candidates for increased transit service than the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area.

The 101 Corridor Plan recommends completion of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and development of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWPRR) right-of-way for a light rail transit system. The plan also calls for increased commute bus service from southern Marin to San Francisco.

#### **4.4.4 Bikeways and Urban Trails**

The existing bikeways and urban trails systems are expected to be maintained. An addition to the bikeway system on Sycamore Avenue, from East Blithedale Avenue to Camino Alto, has also been considered. The systems are used for recreational purposes and for short, local trips. Future travel demand forecasts for daily trips and PM peak hour trips assume no measurable usage of bikeways and urban trails. This is a conservative approach because it concentrates the travel demand forecasted on vehicle trips, which have the greatest impact on the transportation system. Maintenance and improvements to the existing bikeways and urban trails systems would enable Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area residents to make greater use of these systems and to make connections to transit stops for travel to locations outside the planning area.

#### **4.4.5 Truck Routes**

The existing truck routes described in Section 4.3.5 are adequate presently and will be adequate for buildout conditions. Any new design for the U.S. 101 and Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 interchange, or widening of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 or East Blithedale Avenue, should take into account the roadway widths and turning area requirements for trucks.



## 4.5 SUMMARY

The Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area has a balanced transportation system, which provides for the movement of people and goods via several modes of travel. Because of the area's natural beauty and excellent quality of life, the Plan presents recommendations that strive to maintain or increase mobility while preserving the quality of life. From a transportation standpoint, this means that efforts are made to encourage modes of travel other than single-occupant autos. The Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area has local and regional transit service, commuter park-and-ride lots, parking management program in the downtown area, a bikeway system and an urban trails system. These elements of the transportation system provide the alternatives to single-occupant autos. In addition, the compact development pattern in the City, with proximity of residential areas to retail, education, recreation, and commercial land uses, makes walking or biking good alternative travel modes for many residents.

However, experience in many other communities has shown that reducing single-occupant auto travel (or auto travel in general) is a very difficult task. Regional, national, and even international forces have produced a situation where, in most situations, auto travel is faster, cheaper, and more convenient than alternative modes of travel. The one transportation "market" in the planning area in which transit service can compete with auto travel is the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area residence-to-San Francisco employment trips. The proportion of persons making this trip who use transit is estimated to be 20 to 25 percent. The overflowing commuter park-and-ride lots are one indication of this high transit usage. The largest of these lots, the Manzanita lot, had a peak usage of 117 percent on the day surveyed. However, for other travel purposes, the automobile is almost unchallenged as the preferred travel mode for many residents.

Thus the Transportation Section has focused on evaluating existing and future conditions on the roadway system and making recommendations to improve the system where deficiencies exist or where levels of service are poor. The major findings and recommendations are summarized below:



## **Roadway Network and Intersections**

1. Overall, traffic flow currently experiences light to significant congestion during peak periods. The hierarchy of roadways, including freeways, highways, arterial streets, collector streets, and local streets and roads, is clearly defined and operates as it is intended. Significant congestion, representing Level of Service (LOS) D or worse, is experienced at the freeway on- and off-ramps to U.S. 101 and at Tam Junction, which is the major intersection of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 and one of the arterial streets leading to the center of Mill Valley, Almonte Boulevard. Planning Area buildout would significantly increase delays at these already congested locations.
2. Specific improvements have been identified for the three severely congested intersections, so that during the PM peak hour with buildout traffic volumes, intersection operations would be no worse than LOS D. The widening of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 to four lanes, from its beginning at U.S. 101 to Tam Junction, would be required. Any planning and preliminary design study for the widening of Shoreline Highway/State Route 1 should take into consideration environmental, socio-economic, and safety factors as well as the transportation needs of the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area.

## **Parking**

3. In downtown Mill Valley, parking usage is at, or very close to, capacity at peak periods. As further new building development or intensification of existing land uses occurs, the parking supply should be increased.
4. The existing commuter park-and-ride lots are already over capacity. a new 100 to 150 space lot should be developed to serve Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area residents.
5. On-street parking on some narrow and steep roads and streets can impede traffic flow and block access by emergency vehicles. Stricter enforcement of on-street parking regulations should be conducted, especially in the hillside residential areas in the Tamalpais Planning Area. It is also important that all new homes, homes that are being expanded, and all new second units provide adequate off-street parking.

## **Transit**

6. The 101 Corridor Study calls for increased commute bus service from southern Marin to San Francisco. The planning area should continue to monitor transit activities and seek new or additional transit service when appropriate.

### **4.6 INTENT, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS**

#### **Intent**

In order to provide a safe, efficient, and balanced transportation system for the residents of and visitors to the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area, it is the intent of these policies and programs to first identify the existing conditions that are now considered, or could be considered in the future, as negatively effecting the quality of life preferred by the community and then to offer recommendations for improvement. The policies and program recommendations are divided into two basic categories, those related to the roads, streets, and intersections, and those related to the various parking areas throughout the City, including street areas and parking lots. These policies and programs are intended to focus on conditions that can be amended during the life of this Plan.

**Policy T-1: The City shall take an active role in working with adjacent jurisdictions and appropriate agencies to address transportation issues and identify and implement improvements to congested roadways and intersections affecting travel into Mill Valley. In these discussions, the City shall seek a comprehensive discussion of quality of life, transportation, environmental and other buildout issues.**

**Program T-1-1:** The City shall continue to take an active role in Countywide planning groups such as The 101 Corridor Action Committee, Transportation Expenditure Plan Committee, and The Countywide Plan Advisory Committee.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program T-1-2:** The Department of Public Works shall work with the Town of Tiburon, Marin County and Caltrans to study, plan and implement improvements to the Tiburon/East Blithedale Interchange, the Tower Drive/Kipling/East Blithedale intersection, and the Redwood Highway Frontage Road/Seminary Drive Interchange.

**Time Frame:** Initiate upon adoption of the Plan.

**Policy T-1-3:** The Department of Public Works shall work with Marin County and Caltrans to study, plan, and implement improvements to Tam Junction, Manzanita and Pohono Street intersections along Shoreline Highway. These improvements should be consistent with the recommendations of the Tamalpais Area Community Plan.

**Time Frame:** Initiate upon adoption of the Plan.

**Policy T-2:** Streets and sidewalks shall be regularly maintained to provide safe pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation.

**Program T-2-1:** Consistent with available resources, the Department of Public Works shall repair and maintain the existing sidewalks, paths, lanes and steps in the City.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-3:** In planning transportation improvements, pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety shall be a high priority.

**Program T-3-1:** The Police, Fire and Public Works Departments should monitor accident rates.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-4:** In order to avoid adverse traffic, safety and environmental impacts on Bay Front Park, adjacent residential neighborhoods and the Mill Valley Middle School, Hamilton Drive should be maintained in its current condition.

**Program T-4-1:** The City shall maintain Hamilton Drive as a one-way westbound roadway from Seaver Drive to the Public Safety Building. Hamilton Drive shall not be extended across the upper end of Richardson Bay to connect with the end of Sycamore Avenue.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-5:** The city shall encourage the use of Miller Avenue as the primary access street between Camino Alto and downtown Mill Valley in order to protect residential neighborhoods of relatively affordable housing and to minimize traffic and congestion on East Blithedale and Sycamore Avenues.

**Program T-5-1:** The Department of Public Works will utilize available programs and techniques, such as improving paving, adjusting speed limits, improved lighting and lane configuration to increase the convenience of using Miller Avenue for access to the downtown area.

**Program T-5-2:** The Department of Public Works shall identify and implement various programs and techniques to discourage through and commuter traffic from traveling on residential streets such as Sycamore and Nelson Avenues.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Policy T-6:** In order to avoid the requirement to acquire and demolish a significant supply of relatively affordable housing, the two-lane portion of East Blithedale Avenue from Camino Alto to the downtown area shall not be widened.

**Program T-6-1:** The City shall implement the various other policies of this Plan which are intended to minimize increases in traffic along this section of East Blithedale Avenue.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.



**Policy T-7:** The City shall seek to maintain a level of service of C or better at all major signalized intersections in the City, with the exception of the intersection of East Blithedale and Camino Alto, consistent with the other policies in this Plan.

**Program T-7-1:** The Department of Public Works shall be responsible for monitoring the level of service of the signalized intersections in the City.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program T-7-2:** For those signalized intersections approaching LOS D, the Department of Public Works shall be responsible for determining what improvements might be necessary for maintaining LOS C.

**Time Frame:** As required by changes in the level of service.

**Program T-7-3:** The Department of Public Works shall be responsible for studying the times of heavy traffic congestion resulting from left turning movements at the Ryan/East Blithedale and Nelson/East Blithedale intersections and options for improving traffic flow.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Policy T-8:** The City shall seek to maintain a level of service of D or better at the intersection of East Blithedale and Camino Alto.

**Program T-8-1:** Since roadway capacity improvements at this intersection are not feasible, the City shall implement the recommendations for restricting development potential included in the Land Use Section of this Plan. Any amendments to the policies of the Land Use Section should consider the cumulative impacts at this intersection.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-9: The City shall strive to provide adequate public parking in the commercial areas.**

**Program T-9-1:** The Public Works Department shall be responsible for monitoring the parking utilization rate for the existing parking facilities and on-street parking). When the utilization rate approaches 85 percent in the downtown area, the Public Works Department and the Planning Department shall coordinate recommendations for establishing additional parking facilities.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-10: The City shall require all new development and redevelopment proposals to provide adequate parking facilities.**

**Program T-10-1:** The City shall require all proposals for new development or redevelopment in the four commercial areas to include provision for adequate parking. On-site parking facilities are preferable to payment of in-lieu fees. In-lieu parking fees should only be considered as a “last resort” option.

**Time Frame:** As development proposals are reviewed by the City.

**Program T-10-2:** The City shall require that all new homes shall have a minimum of two on-site parking spaces and, unless adequate on-street guest parking is available, should have at least one additional uncovered off-street guest parking space.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing as plans for new homes are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

**Program T-10-3:** Unless variance findings can be made, when existing homes which do not have the required on-site parking are expanded a minimum of two on-site parking spaces should be provided.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing as plans for home additions are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

**Program T-10-4:** As part of the approval of all new second units, the City shall determine that adequate off-street parking is available for both the second unit and the primary residence.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing as plans for conditional use permits for new second units are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-11: The City shall strive to provide additional commuter parking facilities for residents of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.**

**Program T-11-1:** The City shall work with other appropriate agencies to study options for increasing the number of commuter parking spaces or improving the utilization of existing facilities in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Policy T-12: The City shall continue to develop the bikeway system throughout the community.**

**Program T-12-1:** Consistent with available resources, the City should identify and improve the elements remaining to complete the Citywide bikeway system and connect with bicycle trails and paths in the Tamalpais Planning Area.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

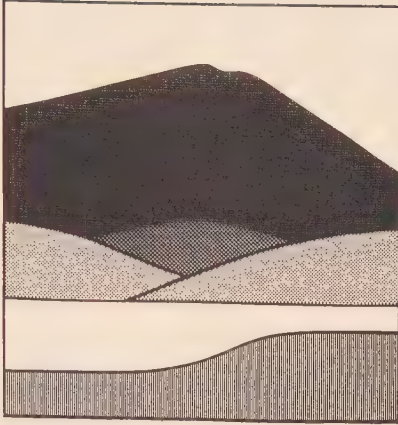
**Policy T-13: The City shall encourage the use of public transit.**

**Program T-13-1:** The City shall continue to work with Golden Gate Transit to maintain, and where feasible expand, transit service in and to Mill Valley.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.







## PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

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## 5. Public Health and Safety

### 5.1 PURPOSE

A major portion of the land within the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Valley planning area is subject to a variety of natural and man-induced hazard factors related to soil instability, seismic activity, flooding, fire and noise, which threaten community health and safety. The purpose of this section is to identify the parts of the planning area where hazards to life and property occur, and provide development and protection policies which specifically respond to those hazards.

This Public Health and Safety Section constitutes the mandatory Safety and Noise Elements. It provides information pertaining to existing conditions and statements of intent, policies and implementation programs for the following issue areas:

- Geotechnical and Flood Hazards
- Fire Hazards
- Noise
- Air Quality

### 5.2 GEOTECHNICAL AND FLOOD HAZARDS

#### 5.2.1 Existing Conditions

The conditions which pose a threat to the health and safety of the residents in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area are identified through comprehensive assessments of the topography, geology, soils, seismology, climate, and hydrology of the planning area.

Hazards identified in the area are: (1) steep slopes, (2) slope instability, (3) potential soil liquefaction, (4) potential soil subsidence, (5) potential earthquake ground shaking, and (6) potential flooding by tsunامي. The parts of the planning area threatened by these natural development constraints are delineated in **Figures 5.1 through 5.4.**

Geologic conditions and related hazards vary considerably from one development site to another within the planning area. Consequently, the general documentation of geologic hazards in this Plan serves only as a broad guideline for planning and development. Thorough site specific hazard investigations should be completed before development is approved, particularly at sites located on hillsides.

## **Description of Geologic Formations**

### **Franciscan Melange**

The Cretaceous-Jurassic (100-130 million years old) Franciscan Formation (**Figure 5.1**), is the predominant bedrock of the Coast Ranges. Throughout much of Marin County, the Franciscan rocks constitute a chaotic assemblage of intact rock masses of various sizes embedded in a matrix of intensely sheared and crushed rock material. This chaotic assemblage, termed “melange,” is the rock type which underlies the hills around Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.

The melange terrain in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area is characterized by scattered outcrops of coherent, resistant rock which stand out on otherwise smooth or gently hummocky slopes. The resistant rock masses are chiefly serpentine, sandstone, chert, volcanic rocks, and metamorphic rocks. The fine-grained melange matrix comprises intensely sheared and crushed material from these rocks, particularly shale.

### **Bay Mud**

The mud flats bordering San Francisco and Richardson Bays (**Figure 5.1**) are underlain by irregular thicknesses of soft bay and marsh deposits including mud, organic debris, silt, peat and sand. For this report, these materials are collectively termed “Bay Mud.” This mud is an unconsolidated material that is both highly compressible and subject to lateral flow when loads are placed on it. It therefore tends to be unstable, both under the static load of fills placed on it and under the complex dynamic loads of earthquakes.



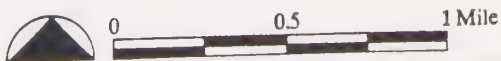


Figure 5.1

## Geology

### Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
 Converse Consultants • Bill Zion • Charles Salter Associates





## **Topography**

Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area are bordered to the north, east, and south by steep hills and ridges that are part of an ancient, sharply dissected highland. Creeks which originate on the flanks of Mount Tamalpais descend through the area and drain into Richardson Bay.

Much of the planning area is characterized by steep topography with slopes of 50% or greater. The low-lying flat lands at the tip of Richardson Bay consist of artificial fill underlain by Bay Mud. As sea level rose over the last 10,000 years, mud from San Francisco Bay filled in the flooded valleys. In many areas, the mud has since crusted over by geologic induration, and is broadly covered with artificial fill.

## **Slope Instability**

### **Landsliding**

Landslides constitute the principal geologic hazard in the hills around Mill Valley and in the Tamalpais Planning Area. Almost without exception, the upland areas around the communities are either unstable or moderately unstable. The primary conditions responsible for landslides in the area are: (1) steep slopes; (2) periods of prolonged rainfall; (3) seismic activity; (4) slopes underlain by weak rocks; and (5) colluvium-filled swales. With urban development, landslides have become a common phenomenon in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area. Many hillsides in the region are very fragile in their natural state and even minor changes in the shape and protective cover of the land surface increase the potential for landslides.

A qualitative assessment of slope instability is mapped on **Figures 5.2** and **5.3**. This mapping is based upon geologic interpretation of the relative stability of slopes based on steepnesses and estimated shear strengths of underlying rock and soil.

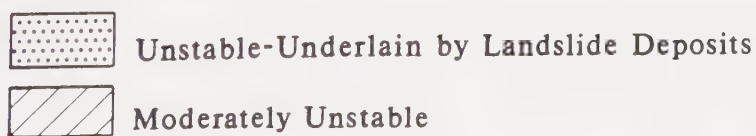
Steep hillsides underlain by clay-rich soil of the Franciscan Formation are especially susceptible to landsliding. These soils expand when wet and shrink when dry, a process which aggravates downslope soil creep and potential for rapid landslidings (debris flows).







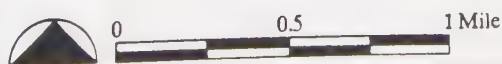
Figure 5.2



# Slope Stability

## Mill Valley General Plan

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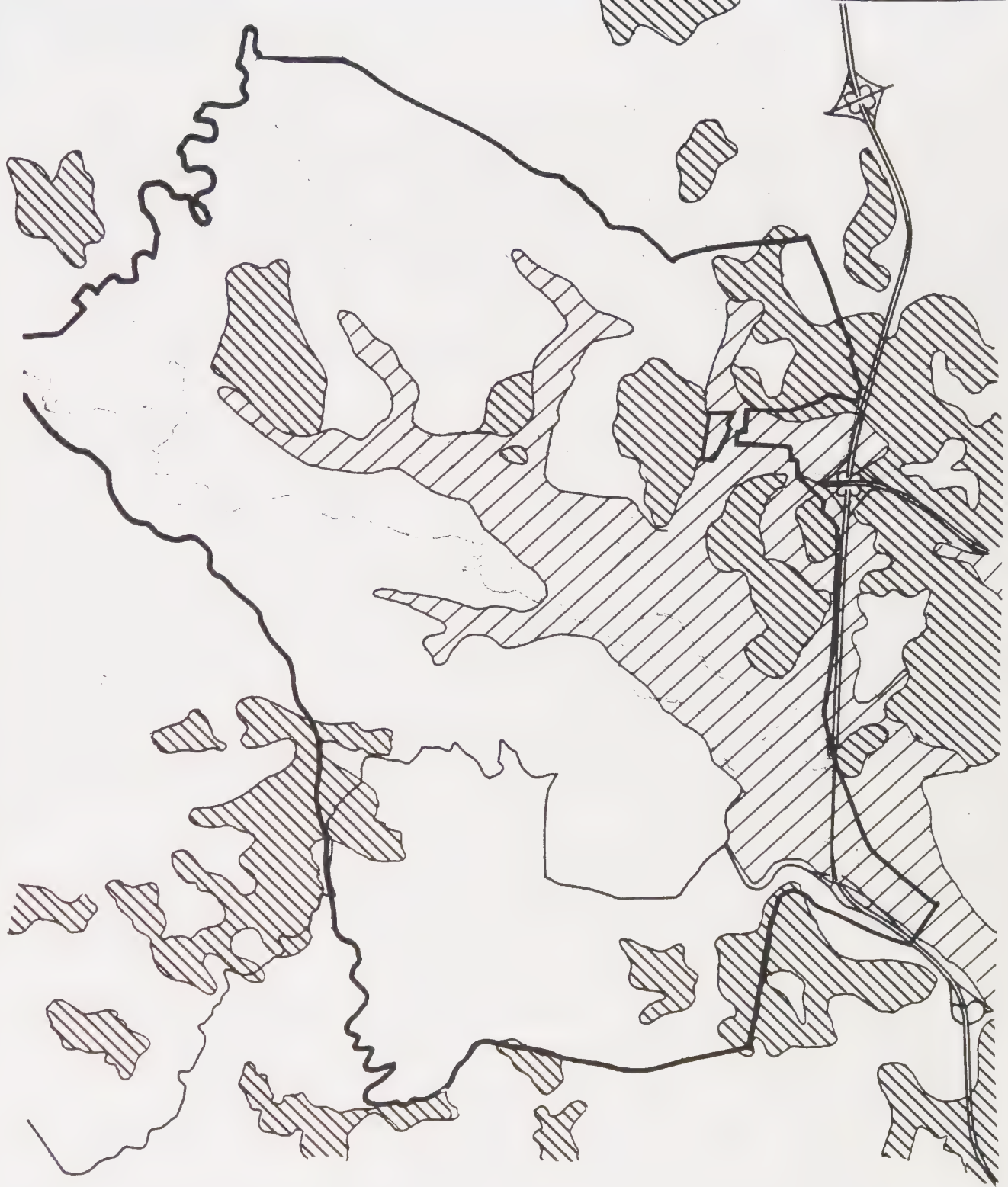
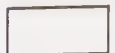


Figure 5.3

## Types of Slope Failure

### Mill Valley General Plan

EDAW Inc. • ESA Inc. • Barton-Aschman Associates  
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Redepositional



0 0.5 1 Mile





In 1979, the U.S. Geological Society (USGS) conducted a study of the areas of Marin County most susceptible to landslides. A simplified version of their findings in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area is given in **Figure 5.2**, in which unstable and moderately unstable hilly areas underlain by Franciscan melange are delineated. The unstable areas are those slopes which contain or are immediately adjacent to landslide deposits. The moderately unstable areas are slopes with grades exceeding 15 percent that are underlain by bedrock units susceptible to landsliding, but not presently containing landslide deposits.

Even though almost all of the hillside areas are classified as unstable or moderately unstable, this does not mean that they cannot be developed. It means, however, that it is important that hillside sites proposed for development be investigated by an engineering geologist on a case by case basis.

Further distinctions can be made between different kinds of landslides. Ellen, et. al. (1982) identified and mapped areas prone to rapid and slow landslides throughout the planning area (**Figure 5.3**). Rapid flows, which include debris flows and debris avalanches, involve the sudden failure of steep slopes and the rapid downslope movement of material. They threaten life, as well as property, not only on steep slopes but in possible impact areas downslope. Rates of movement of rapid flows typically range from walking speed to avalanche speed.

Slow slides, or earth flows, involve the slow downslope movement of material. Such slides rarely threaten life directly; damage takes the form of gradual distortion, sometimes leading to rupture of foundations, embankments or buried utilities.

Most landslide damage in Marin County has occurred within pre-existing landslide deposits. Ancient landslides reactivated as a result of seismic activity, abnormally prolonged or intense rainfall, or human interference such as grading, construction or lawn watering, or a combination of these factors have been the most common cause of landslide damage.

Slopes which are free of landslide deposits are likely to remain so in the future, unless destabilized by road cuts, site grading or excess watering.

## Erosion

The potential for soil erosion is greatest where slopes are underlain by predominantly sandy and silty soils. Most of the soils within the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area are clay and are therefore not resistant to erosion. In contrast, the Franciscan rock assemblages near ground surface are resistant to erosion. Regardless of rock or soil type, this potential is increased where slopes are exposed by excavation, where the natural protective vegetation has been removed, where surface runoff is concentrated, or where drainage is inadequate.

## Steep Topography

For the most part, the steep hills in the planning area are underlain by soil and rock which, if properly excavated, can safely support building foundations. However, some of these areas are unsuitable for development because construction and maintenance of safe access is difficult or is infeasible for safety, visual, and economic reasons. In many cases, excessive grading would be necessary to provide accessible roads which are properly designed and constructed across unstable slopes.

In addition, access roads to many of the steeper parts of the planning area would require cul-de-sacs at least 1,000 feet long. Based on past experience in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area, such roads are especially susceptible to landsliding and closure to traffic for extended periods. The fact that many of these steep areas are also particularly vulnerable to fires compounds the threat to public safety, should access be blocked in any way.

## **Seismic Shaking**

Damage from earthquakes results from (1) surface faulting, (2) ground shaking, (3) landslides or liquefaction induced by ground shaking and (4) fires and other by-products of ground shaking.

Nearly all destructive earthquakes in the San Francisco Bay area originate on faults in the San Andreas system. As illustrated on **Figure 5.4**, the San Andreas and Hayward faults pass within about five miles southwest and 12 miles northeast of Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area, respectively. Since no known active faults transect the Mill Valley Area, the risk of surface faulting (ground rupture) is small.

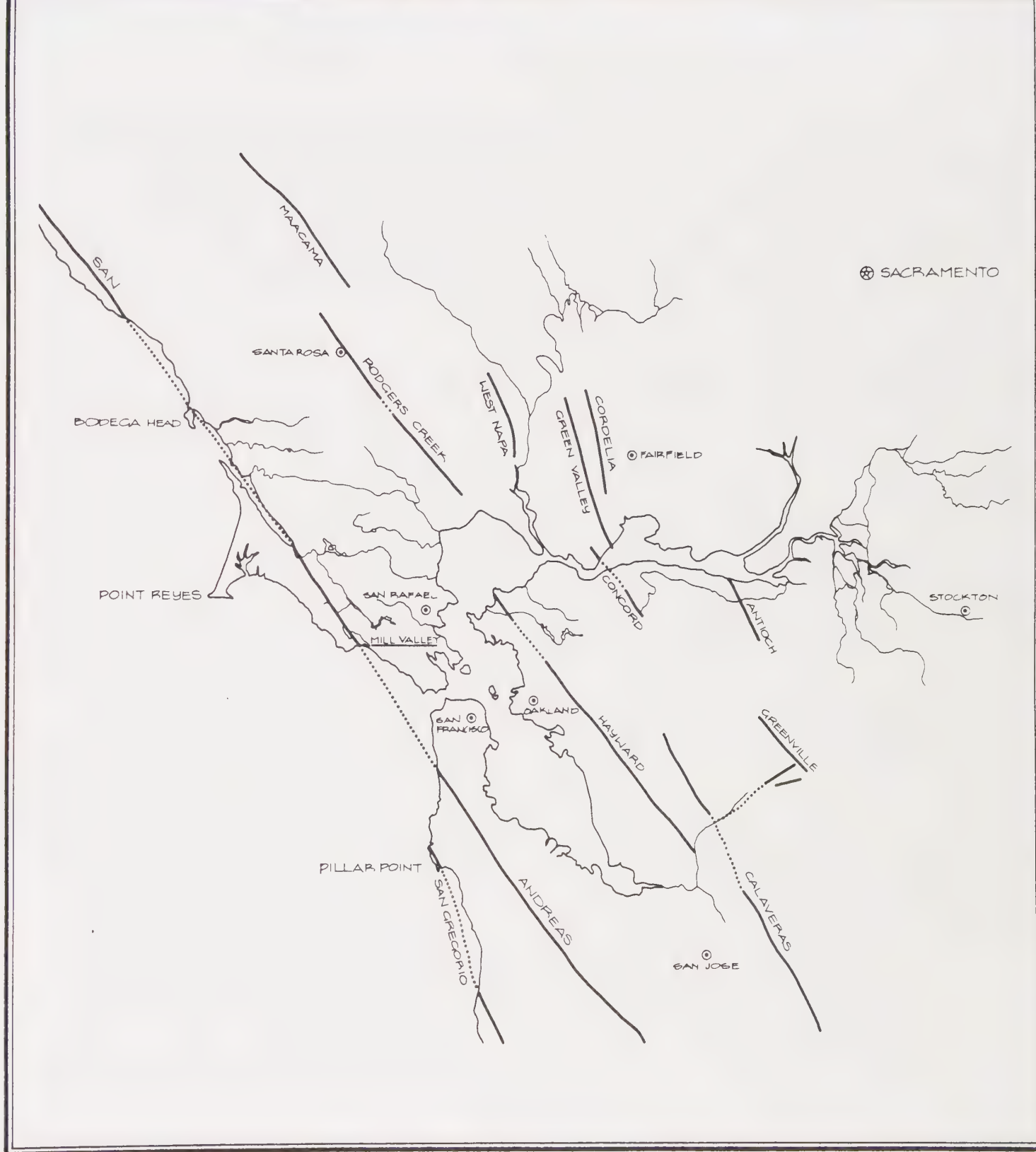
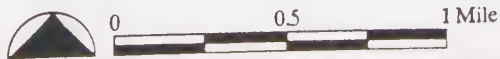


Figure 5.4

# Fault Map

## Mill Valley General Plan

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No recorded earthquakes with Richter magnitude greater than 5 have occurred at Mill Valley or the Tamalpais Planning Area since 1906. The City has been subjected only to minor shaking caused by nearby, moderate seismic activity such as the March 22, 1957 San Francisco earthquake. Recent scientific studies indicate that an earthquake of significant magnitude along the San Andreas, Hayward, Calaveras, or Rodgers Creek faults is likely in the next several decades. This area will clearly be subject to the widely-felt effects of such a shock.

Only moderate seismic shaking would induce earthquake-triggered ground failure such as soil liquefaction, lurching, differential settlement, and landsliding. This ground failure would cause potentially serious damage to many types of structures.

Where Franciscan bedrock crops out at the surface, or is mantled only by a thin layer of soil, relatively high frequency, low amplitude shaking can be expected. Conversely, where the substantial thicknesses of loose, water-saturated Bay Mud underlies the surface, shaking will be relatively low in frequency and high in amplitude. Shaking in the portions of the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area underlain by relatively dense alluvial materials will probably be somewhere between these extremes.

While the specific characteristics of shaking and effects on structures will be site-specific, the following generalizations are appropriate.

In the sandstone uplands, most modern single-family buildings with foundations on rock will perform reasonably well. Modern multistory buildings on rock should not be subject to collapse, although some serious damage will occur. In the melange uplands, single-story buildings will experience strong shaking, but most wood frame buildings will remain intact. In the mixed sandstone and melange lowlands where there is greater development density, the damage potential will be greater. Unreinforced brick will suffer moderate to severe damage. Falling debris will endanger those in the vicinity of these older buildings. There is also a danger of fire from the many gas lines in these heavily built-up areas.

The areas densely settled alluvial lowlands also have a potential for heavy damage. Many large, one or two-story buildings that are of older construction with reinforced brick walls and overhanging parapets are located on these lowlands. Consequently, falling debris poses a hazard to persons running out of these older structures during an earthquake.

However, the primary danger created by a seismic event would be possible fire from disrupted gas and power lines. In the hill uplands, where access is already restricted and vegetative conditions constitute a major fire hazard under normal conditions, seismic landslide blocking of roads and disruption of water lines would increase fire dangers significantly.

## **Ground Failure**

### Liquefaction

The Bay Mud in many areas around San Francisco Bay contains extensive layers and lenses of relatively clean, well sorted (uniformly sized) sands and silts. Similar sandy or silty soils may also exist within alluvial deposits along stream channels in the area.

These soils are subject to disruption (liquefaction) with loss of internal strength during seismic shaking events. When foundation soils beneath structures liquefy, substantial damage may result. For example, soil liquefaction may cause buildings to sink and/or tilt, and lighter materials, such as water and gas lines, to rise to the surface. Gas lines may rupture, causing fire and/or gas explosions. Consequently, areas with potential for seismic liquefaction of soil should be carefully assessed before proceeding with development.

### Subsidence

Where appreciable thicknesses of Bay Mud underlie the eastern portion of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area, structural loading can cause sinking, and differential settlement. At most locations, damage due to such subsidence can be prevented by proper site preparation and foundation design.

Over the years, large areas of marshlands underlain by Bay Mud adjacent to Richardson Bay have been artificially filled with an assortment of soil, sand, and crushed rock materials. Many of these fill sites may have been properly engineered and are relatively strong and stable. However, despite fill engineering, the underlying mud is not necessarily stable. Consequently, the areas with fill on Bay Mud have a high risk for building, utilities, and road damage due to differential settlement or lateral plastic flow of mud from beneath fill loads. Subsidence can result from either structural loading, poorly constructed fills, or from seismic liquefaction of near-surface sand layers within the mud. Under such conditions, the risk is high for substantial damage to roads and structure founded upon fills on Bay Mud.

## Tsunami

Tsunamis are sea waves generated by earthquakes. Historically, these waves have caused serious damage along the California coastline after earthquake events in the Pacific Ocean, such as at Crescent City in 1964. Damage results from the destructive wave front and the inundation of the wave as it runs up onshore.

The probable frequency and magnitude of tsunami effects on Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area can be estimated from data on tsunamis which have impinged upon the coast of California and entered San Francisco Bay. A once-in-500-year tsunami would have a wave height of 13 feet at the Golden Gate and a height of 5 feet at Mill Valley.

Development on the bayfront should be designed and located to prevent major threats to life or substantial property damage as a result of tsunamis. The flood prone zones are bayfront areas which would be inundated during a 100-year tsunami. An important consideration in determining how far tsunami run-up will extend onto adjacent land surfaces is the tidal level at the time of occurrence. If a tsunami is superimposed on a very high tide, the damage potential is much more severe than at times of low tide. However, as with storm water inundation, the possibility of a large tsunami and high tide occurring simultaneously is quite remote. Analysis indicates that a tsunami-induced sea level rise to 12 feet above mean sea level is an infrequent (100-year) probable event. This 12-foot incremental level has been assumed for planning purposes and defines much of the bayfront flood zone areas.

## Dam Failure

Cascade Reservoir is a former water storage facility located in the upper reaches of Cascade Canyon. Although this facility is no longer used for water supply, retention of water in the reservoir is still possible. If failure of this structure were to occur, the area flooded would be a function of the mode of failure and the level of Cascade Creek below. If failure took place over several hours and the creek was nearly dry, most of the water from the ruptured dam would follow the stream channel to the Bay. If failure was rapid and occurred when the stream was at maximum flood stage, the escaping water would inundate parts of the valley.



## 5.2.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs

### **Intent**

It is the intent of these policies to ensure that potential geotechnical and flood hazards to the Mill Valley community are minimized.

**Policy PH-1: The City shall strive to ensure that all grading, site improvements and structures minimize geotechnical and flood hazards to people and property.**

**Program PH 1-1:** The City will utilize the following guidelines in reviewing proposals for new development:

Guideline 1: Grading for and construction of new roads, utilities, and buildings shall not be permitted in areas of steep topography unless appropriate geotechnical studies prepared as part of the environmental review process by qualified geologists and/or geologic engineers show that both static and dynamic hazardous conditions either do not exist or can be mitigated by site preparation measures and/or engineering design.

Guideline 2: A structure may be built on a grade of 50 percent or greater only if it does not require excessive disruption of the existing topography and vegetation and, based upon detailed analysis of the specific site, if it can be demonstrated that access and utilities to the site can be provided in a manner which eliminates any reasonable possibility of disruption or damage to roads and utilities due to earth movement and ensures adequate access for public safety vehicles.

Guideline 3: During the environmental review process, development sites shall be evaluated for the presence of seismic shaking-related hazard conditions (soils, geology, etc.) and their implications for structural design shall be thoroughly discussed.

Guideline 4: All new buildings shall conform to the latest seismic structural standards of the Uniform Building Code as a minimum standard. In addition, since UBC standards do not guarantee against heavy seismic damage, all building designed for human occupancy, other than single-story woodframe structures and one- or two-family woodframe dwellings, should be examined and certified by a civil or structural engineer registered in this State. Certification should include consideration of the effects of an earthquake intensity level of IX Modified Mercalli.



Guideline 5: Multi-story structures (over two stories) underlain by thin alluvial soils over bedrock shall be well anchored to the underlying bedrock by piers, poles, piles, or similar footings.

Guideline 6: Multi-story structures underlain by flat alluvial soils may also be “floated” on a low-friction concrete pillar or pad structure where connection to bedrock cannot reasonably be accomplished.

Guideline 7: All new buildings and structures intended for human occupancy shall be structurally designed to resist those vertical and horizontal seismic loadings, particular shear and racking movements, determined to be characteristic of a particular site through site investigation.

Guideline 8: Because of the high probability of subsidence or differential settlement, and the high risk of earthquake shaking and liquefaction, extensive site investigation shall be required for all projects proposed for areas underlain by Bay Mud. This study shall address such factors as thickness and compressibility of Bay Mud, depth to bedrock, presence of layers and lenses of sand, peat, or shells, and a technical description of any engineered fill.

Guideline 9: Since utilities can be severely damaged by seismic-induced ground failure, no new public or private power, water, sewer, or gas lines shall be permitted to cross ground failure areas unless reasonable alternative routes are not available or the facility design includes sufficient provision for valves, switches, and other equipment appropriate to ensure rapid shutoff and minimum potential disruption of service, and minimum adverse impact on adjacent and surrounding areas in the event of seismic-induced ground failure. Lines should also be accessible for emergency repairs to minimize the potential effects of service interruption. Provision of an independent water supply system for fire protection (i.e., use of Bay water, or swimming pools) could be a desirable backup system to protect those structures and inhabitants in the most vulnerable and already built-up areas of town.

Guideline 10: Construction and site fill on areas underlain by Bay Mud shall be engineered in a manner that minimizes the potential of mud flow and the resulting environmental damage.

Guideline 11: Within the flood plain zone as identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Federal Flood Insurance Program, the elevation of the finished floor level of any new structure intended for human occupancy shall be designed to maintain an elevation of at least eight feet above mean sea level, taking into consideration subsidence. Minor recreation structures on the bay front should be excluded from this requirement.

Guideline 12: New roads and structures constructed within the Flood Insurance Program flood plain should minimize any reduction in the surface area of the flood plain. This objective can be achieved by building structures on piles, or limiting landfill to only the area occupied by the structure and by allowing for the flow of flood water across roads which would otherwise serve as a dam isolating land now serving as a portion of the flood water overflow area.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing as new development proposals are reviewed during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH 1-2:** Any existing facility which is located in a designated area of slope instability, or ground failure and which attracts numbers of people, provides essential community services, or is open to the general public, shall be inspected and, if necessary, structurally upgraded to eliminate any hazard, or shall be relocated or be closed to occupancy by the general public.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program PH 1-3:** Existing seismically weak structures, particularly those constructed of unreinforced masonry, which represent a threat to public safety shall be structurally upgraded to abate such hazard or be closed to occupancy when the present use is changed or when an application is made for major renovation.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH 1-4:** The City shall undertake engineering investigations to determine the stability of the City-owned Cascade Dam under severe rainfall and landslide conditions, or if subjected to an earthquake of magnitude 8.25 to 8.5 Richter on the San Andreas Fault.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

## **5.3 FIRE HAZARD**

### **5.3.1 Existing Conditions**

Within the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area wild fire hazards probably pose the greatest threat to public safety and property of all other potential hazards, including flooding, seismic events, and slope failure. It is imperative that fire hazards be identified and ecologically sound preventative actions be taken to reduce the fire dangers which currently exist within and adjacent to each community and their surrounding wild lands.

According to the Mill Valley Fire Department, most of the fires that occur within the Mill Valley Area are caused by humans. Lightning in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Valley region is infrequent, and has not been a cause of fire in recent years. Seismic events are sure to occur in the future and present an ever-increasing fire hazard as development and the use of natural gas increases in the study area.

Weather conditions, fuel supply and topography are all factors which contribute to the rate of spread of fire. Of these factors, only the fuel load of an area can be controlled. Hot dry weather reduces the moisture content of vegetation, causing it to burn more easily. Moreover, fuel that is dense in concentration burns more rapidly. Fires also tend to burn more rapidly on hillsides than on a level ground if all factors are equal. Often, wind velocity and direction determines whether a fire travels upslope or downslope. When fire travels upslope, heat rises ahead of the fire drying the vegetation, creating a “chimney effect” and sometimes causing it to combust spontaneously. Roads in the hillside areas are typically narrow and winding, and often dead end. This limits the access of firefighters and equipment to private homes and wild land. In addition, response times tend to be long in these areas. Where fire roads exist, they are often overgrown and require continual maintenance to provide adequate access. Because of these conditions, the Fire Department is concerned that it would be unable to easily control or stop a fire which had spread to the size of one acre in a wild land area.



Fires in undeveloped areas can be caused by lightning, a casual accident, or a structural fire that spreads to wild land. Arson is also a significant cause of wildland fire. In Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area, the upper south-facing slopes of Warner Ridge (Corte Madera Ridge), Blithedale Canyon Ridge, Cascade Canyon, Fern Canyon, Summit Ridge, and the southeast face of Mt. Tamalpais are designated as severe fire hazard zones. These areas are characterized by steep slopes and are densely covered by chaparral assemblages which burns explosively and cause fire to spread rapidly. A major fire has not occurred in these areas since the fire of 1929 and as a result, the density of dry vegetation has increased.

Specific programs and activities can be undertaken to reduce the fire hazards in undeveloped areas in both Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area. Public awareness of fire hazards should be increased by stressing that a casual accident could lead to a large scale wild fire. An ecologically sound firebreak system should be developed at locations recommended by local and regional fire departments. Dry grass and brush should be removed along the boundary between residential structures and undeveloped land to prevent fire from spreading between homes and surrounding vegetation. Fire roads should be properly engineered, especially through areas of potential ground failure, and regularly cleared of encroaching vegetation.

Controlled burning, used to reduce the fuel load in fire hazard zones, may also be considered as a fire control measure in open land areas. This method has been used in various areas throughout the state, including Marin County, to reduce the fuel load in fire hazard areas. The Marin County Water District and the Marin County Open Space District are currently conducting a study of the pros and cons of controlled burning. The results of this study will assist in determining whether the use of controlled burning is appropriate for the area. If controlled burns are eventually implemented in the Planning Area, they would be supervised by the California Department of Forestry according to an approved plan.

Controlled burns are often of limited effectiveness as a fire block, creating burned patches which may be too isolated to contain a large wild fire. However controlled burns can be used to establish a fuel management "age classing" program. As part of this program, small patches of land are burned and the locations of the burn are carefully documented. During each consecutive year, different designated patches of wildland are burned. The effect of such a program is to eliminate older, dead vegetation with no fuel moisture and to track the age of the vegetation in the area. Eventually, controlled burns could be repeated in areas where the regenerated patches of vegetation had reached a certain age, when they presented a greater fire hazard.



While controlled burns may have a beneficial, regenerative effect on some floral assemblages, they also have the potential to devastate other plants and animals in an ecosystem especially if carried out during winter. In addition, because controlled burns are potentially uncontrollable, they should only be used in areas with established firebreaks, during relatively low fire danger seasons, and when other methods of fire hazard reduction are not feasible.

Fires in developed areas are usually accidental, man-caused structural fires or seismically-induced gas and electrical fires. In the event of an earthquake, water heaters may fall over, and landslides and lateral spreading of ground may occur, causing gas lines in homes to rupture and fire to result. Debris generated from landslides may obstruct access for firefighters making the fire difficult to control.

In general, there is a greater chance that fire will spread from one structure to another as the density of a development area is increased. Residential parking on narrow streets greatly limits access of emergency vehicles, reducing the response time of firefighters. Therefore, highly developed areas are more prone to any fire, whatever the cause. A large number of eucalyptus trees and very narrow setbacks between structures in many residential areas of the Tamalpais Planning Area pose a significant danger for the rapid spread of fire. Particular regions which are prone to seismically-induced fires include developments on areas composed of weak and soft soils that are susceptible to lateral spreading or lurching and areas prone to landslides.

Various activities should be implemented in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area to reduce fire hazards in developed areas. The joint Mill Valley/Tamalpais Fire District serves all of Mill Valley and most of the Tamalpais Planning Area. Muir Woods Park is served by the Marin County Fire Department. Public education programs which educate homeowners on fire hazard reduction, should continue to be developed. These programs could help families develop emergency response plans which outline escape routes within the home and review correct fire response procedures. The Mill Valley Fire Department currently requires fire sprinklers and fire-safe roofing for all new homes and major additions to existing homes. Home owners in the urban-wildland interface areas are also encouraged to reduce highly flammable vegetation on their properties and “greenbelting” programs are recommended for homes in high fire hazard areas. “Greenbelting” involves establishing protective strips around the perimeter of properties by removing characteristically flammable vegetation and planting native fire-resistant vegetation in their place.

In order to ensure a sufficient water supply for firefighting, the water main system should be reviewed and expanded where structural density is the highest and where the danger of seismically-induced gas fire exists. The current water system is now the oldest in the Marin Municipal Water District. Some water mains are over eighty years old and water service and water pressure is often insufficient to accommodate the needs of the community. The Mill Valley Fire Department, the Mill Valley Public Works Department, and the Marin Municipal Water District are working together to gradually improve the system, but the process is slow. Well installation could be required for residences located in areas where water supply is limited. Most importantly, the need for land use regulations restricting residential development within high fire hazard areas is critical.

To protect against seismically-induced gas fires, gas mains should be engineered to provide flexibility which would allow seismic movement without rupturing. Gas lines should also undergo a careful engineering-geologic analysis to avoid installation in places where ground failure is likely. Residents should be educated on how to reduce fire hazards within their own homes. They should display house numbers prominently, install gas shutoff valves, and they should firmly secure their water heaters and know what action to take in the event of a seismic emergency. Finally, the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area multi-hazard response plan should be reviewed and revised where necessary.

### **5.3.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

#### **Intent**

It is the intent of these policies to ensure that potential fire hazard threats to Mill Valley are minimized.

**Policy PH-2:** The City shall strive to ensure that the fire hazard risk to persons and property in Mill Valley is minimized consistent with the resource protection policies contained in other portions of this Plan.

**Program PH-2-1:** In order to minimize fuel buildup in fire-prone areas, the City Fire Department shall require all property owners to periodically thin vegetation and clear underbrush which constitutes a fire hazard. A balance, however, should be maintained

between the degree of fire prevention clearance and the retention of vegetation with both wildlife habitat and scenic value, and to avoid soil erosion problems.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program PH-2-2:** The Mill Valley Fire Department should continue to develop public education programs which educate homeowners on fire hazard reduction. These programs should also help families develop emergency response plans which outline escape routes within the home and review correct fire response procedures.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

**Program PH-2-3:** The City should continue to require fire sprinklers and fire-safe roofing for all new homes and major additions to existing homes.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH-2-4:** Homeowners in urban/wildland interface areas should be encouraged to undertake “greenbelting” programs including establishing protective strips around the perimeter of properties by removing characteristically flammable vegetation and planting native fire-resistant vegetation in its place.

**Time Frames:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH-2-5:** In order to ensure a sufficient water supply for firefighting, the existing water main system should be reviewed and upgraded where density is the highest and/or where the danger of fires is the greatest.

**Time Frame:** As funds are available during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH-2-6:** To protect against seismically-induced gas fires, gas mains should be engineered to provide flexibility which would allow seismic movement without rupturing. Gas lines should also undergo a careful engineering-geologic analysis to avoid installation in places where ground failure is likely.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.



**Program PH-2-7:** Residents should be educated on how to reduce fire hazards within their own homes. They should display house numbers prominently and they should firmly secure their water heaters and install gas shutoff valves and know what action to take in the event of a seismic emergency.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH-2-8:** The Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area multi-hazard response plan should be reviewed and revised where necessary.

**Time Frame:** As funding is available.

## **5.4 NOISE CONDITIONS**

### **5.4.1 Existing Conditions and Projections**

The noise environment in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area has been characterized using the results of a noise measurement program conducted in October 1987, and by computer modeling of traffic noise exposure on highways and arterials throughout the area. The area was found to be a generally quiet rural residential area with no significant aircraft, industrial, or commercial noise. Noise from Highway 101 does, however, affect some commercial and residential neighborhoods within the area. The most significant noise source in the area on weekdays is commuter traffic on Shoreline Highway, Miller Avenue and East Blithedale Avenue. On weekends, traffic noise decreases on some arterials while noise along the Shoreline and Panoramic Highways remains the same or increases from traffic to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the west Marin beaches. The results of the Richardson Bay Sea Plane Base and Heliport Noise Analysis prepared by Marin County for the County-Wide Plan, reveal that the noise exposure from these aircraft operations is below that from adjacent Highway 101 and off-ramp traffic.

The Appendix contains information on the fundamental concepts of environmental noise, for those unfamiliar with the technical aspects of environmental noise. It is important to note that noise exposure (i.e., in terms of the California Standard Community Noise Equivalent Level [CNEL]) is a cumulative 24-hour measure which considers the total effects of all noise events



during a day, biasing evening and nighttime periods to account for the greater human sensitivity to noise annoyance during these time periods. Maximum noise levels of individual events contribute to the overall CNEL noise exposure value but do not, of course, fully define 24-hour noise exposure.

**Figure 5.5, Tam Junction Weekday Noise Exposure**, presents the results of a 24-hour monitoring in graphical form. The center values, denoted  $L_{eq}$ , are the hourly noise levels which represent the average equivalent noise level. It can be seen that these values, starting at 8:00 a.m., were fairly constant throughout the day, gradually decreasing during the nighttime period to minimum level at 3:00 a.m., and then gradually rising during the early morning hours. This trend is also reflected in the maximum and minimum noise levels. The fluctuation in hourly noise exposure represents a weekday trend throughout the City of Mill Valley and Tam Valley study area.

### Noise Measurements

A noise measurement and monitoring program was conducted to determine the existing noise environment throughout the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. This program involved 24-hour continuous monitoring during a weekday at Tam Junction, and seven shorter duration measurements at various other locations throughout the area. The 24-hour continuous monitoring results quantify the variation in noise level throughout a 24-hour period. The shorter duration measurements define the magnitude of noise exposure at the location during a specified hour. A variation in noise level, quantified by the continuous monitoring, is applied to the shorter duration measurements to develop the 24-hour noise exposure value at each measurement location. This method of monitoring, in conjunction with shorter duration measurement, has proven the most efficient means of obtaining the data to define community noise exposure throughout a large community.

Noise monitoring utilizes digital equipment which records the A-weighted sound level each second continuously throughout a 24-hour period. This equipment stores summary statistical information hourly, enabling documentation of the variation in noise exposure over the recording period. The shorter duration noise survey measurements are made with portable sound level instruments which precisely measure and record noise exposure. This enables rapid identification of the magnitude of the noise exposure at measurement location. Short-term noise measurement equipment performs digital sampling and an analysis in a manner similar to that by the 24-hour noise monitors. All microphones were located five feet above the ground to simulate average ear height.



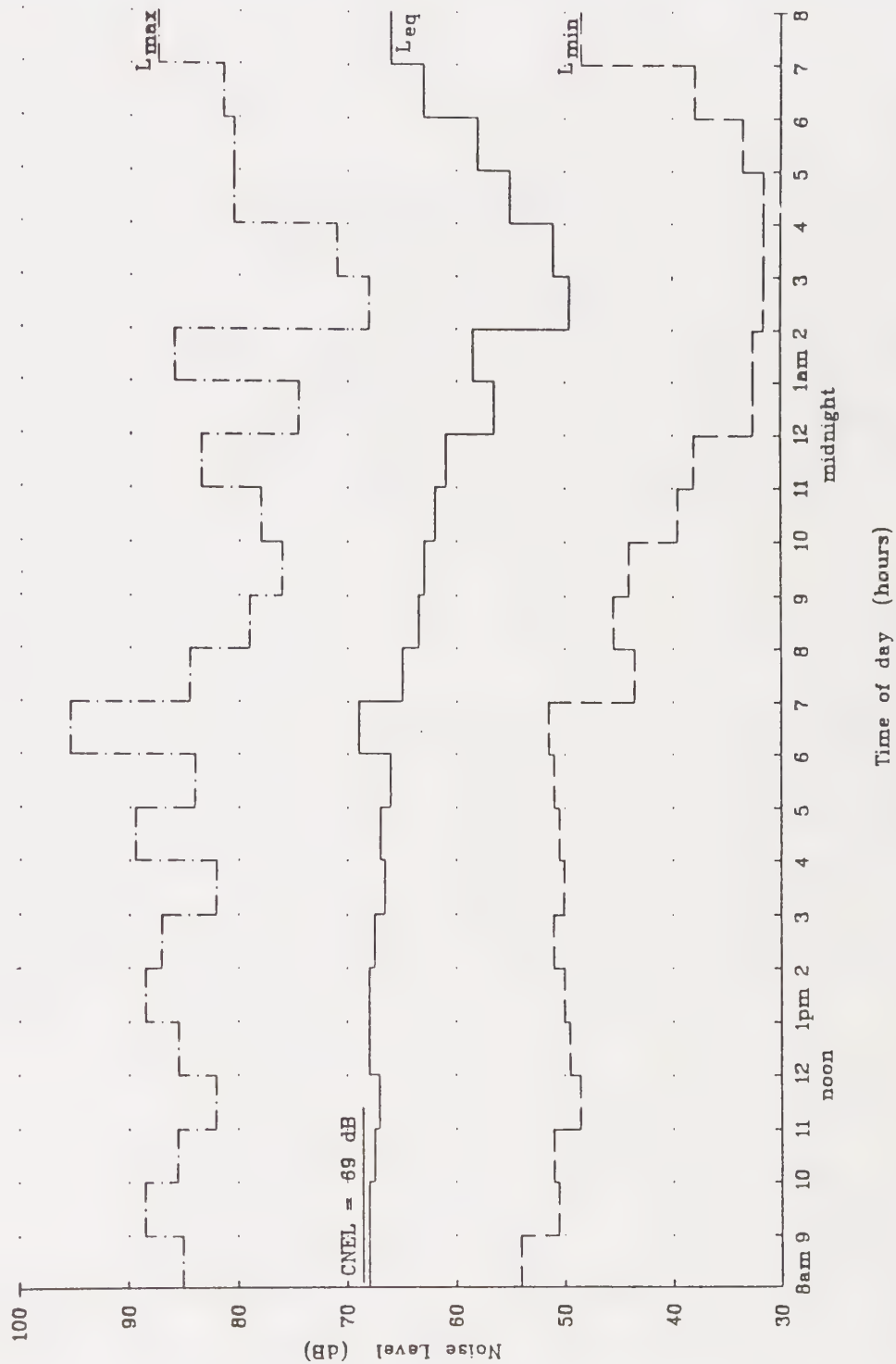
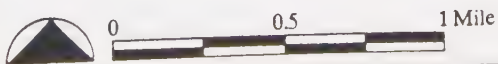


Figure 5.5

# Weekday Noise Exposure

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### Site A

This measurement location is located on the south side of Shoreline Highway, approximately 50 feet south of the eastbound traffic lane, on the currently vacant property immediately west of Adobe Pet Hospital and immediately east of the Shoreline Shopping Center parking lot. It is also the site of the 24-hour continuous monitoring station. This location was selected because it comprises a major gateway to the Tamalpais Valley area. Traffic was the only significant noise source, which is comprised of idling and moving cars and trucks, acceleration and deceleration noise, motorcycles, busses, squeaking brakes and horns. No noise was audible from Shoreline Shopping Center rooftop mechanical equipment, nor from the power transmission or distribution lines nearby.

### Site B

This site is located on the front lawn of 314 Marin Drive, approximately 25 feet from the edge of the nearest traffic. This measurement was made at the end of a sunny Sunday afternoon in an attempt to document the noise effects of vehicles attempting to avoid Shoreline Highway traffic by using the Marin Drive shortcut around Tam Junction. The road is gradually curved at this site with a 15-mile per hour posted speed limit, although typically traffic speed was estimated at 25 miles per hour. Noise sources were approximately 100 cars per hour, distant dog barking, distant lawn sprinkler, and wind between five and ten knots through the foliage.

### Site C

This site is on the north side of Shoreline Highway, on the steps to the apartments at 410 Shoreline Highway. The microphone was located approximately 50 feet north of the nearest traffic lane on slightly elevated ground approximately ten feet above the highway, almost fully exposed to passing traffic. This section of Shoreline is straighter than most, enabling vehicles to travel up to 50 miles per hour. Traffic volume at the time of measurement was moderate, there was very light truck and bus traffic, and traffic volume was approximately the same in each direction.

#### Site D

This location is 777 Miller Avenue, across from the Tam High School playing field, near the entrance to the Mill Creek Meadows townhouse development. A microphone was located approximately 50 feet from the nearest traffic lane, slightly above the street level, providing full exposure to passing traffic on Miller Avenue. Weekday morning traffic at the time of measurement was moderate and nearly equal from each direction. Residences within the townhouse development were typically set back between 150 and 250 feet from the traffic lane.

#### Site E

This measurement location is situated on a vacant parcel across the street from 33 Lomita Drive, approximately 25 feet north of the street. Only two cars on Lomita Drive passed during the measurement period. The predominant and constant background noise was from Highway 101 traffic approximately 1,500 feet to the east. There is no site line to the highway and an effective noise barrier from local topography lies between the measurement location and Highway 101. This measurement site was located near the east side of the vacant parcel in order to document the most severe noise impact to the site. There was no audible noise from the power transmission line located approximately 400 feet east of the measurement location.

#### Site F

This measurement location is on the southeast corner of East Blithedale and Hilarita Avenue, across the street from Mesa Avenue. The microphone was located approximately 25 feet south of the nearest lane of East Blithedale Avenue and 30 feet east of Hilarita in a small vacant lot which is currently used as a parking area for 82 Hilarita Avenue. Only four vehicles used Hilarita Avenue during the measurement and no vehicles used Mesa Avenue. The predominant noise source was moderate traffic, approximately equal in both directions, along East Blithedale Avenue.

## Site G

This measurement was made to document the quietest section of the study area. The measurement location was in the hill area forming the base of Mt. Tamalpais, 50 feet from the street at 750 Lovell Avenue. This is one of the quietest residential areas found anywhere. On the morning of the measurement, the wind was extremely light and no traffic was evident near the site. The only noise source was a distant creek. It is expected that, in the absence of a foggy morning, light wind through foliage would increase the noise levels measured by at least ten dB.

**Table 5.1**

### Existing Noise Levels

Site Designation*	Noise Source Location	Weekday/Weekend	Measured Noise Levels							Computed CNEL
			$L_{eq}$	$L_1$	$L_{10}$	$L_{33}$	$L_{50}$	$L_{90}$	$L_{99}$	
A	Tam Junction	Weekend	67	75	70	67	65	60	56	69
A	Tam Junction	Weekday**	67		69	66	65	60		69
B	Marin Drive	Weekend	56	66	61	52	49	43	42	58
C	Shoreline Hwy	Weekday	64	72	67	64	61	50	43	66
D	Miller Avenue	Weekday	65	74	69	65	62	52	47	66
E	Lomita Drive	Weekday	54	64	57	54	53	52	47	55
F	E. Blithedale	Weekday	63	72	66	63	61	46	39	64
G	Lovell Avenue	Weekday	31	41	33	29	29	27	27	32

\* See Figure 5.6 for location.

\*\* Information at the same location for the same time period as the weekend measurement; taken from the 24-hour noise monitor data.

**Table 5.1**, Existing Noise Levels, is a tabular presentation of the statistical results of the short duration noise measurements. The first measurement value presented,  $L_{eq}$ , is the equivalent noise level corresponding to the  $L_{eq}$  values. The six other statistical parameters are percentile levels which are used to describe the degree of variation in noise level throughout the measurement period. The  $L_1$  value is the noise level exceeded one percent of the time, the  $L_{10}$  level is exceeded ten percent of the time. The final column, Computed CNEL, is not a measured value but rather an analytical value calculated from the shorter duration noise measurement results, time of day and variation in noise levels throughout the 24-hour period. The Computed CNEL values are shown at the corresponding measurement locations with the noise modeling results in **Figure 5.6**, Existing Noise Environment.



A worst-case noise model was then prepared for existing traffic noise sources throughout the study area. Specifically, the weekday condition was utilized for all sections of Camino Alto, East Blithedale, Tiburon Boulevard, Miller Avenue, Almonte Boulevard and U.S. Highway 101. The worst-case condition exists during the weekend for Sequoia Valley Road, Panoramic Highway and Shoreline Highway. Therefore, the noise contours presented in **Figure 5.6** represent a composite of weekday and weekend traffic conditions. The purpose of the noise contours is to identify areas requiring more detailed noise analysis for specific land use alternatives. Therefore, worst-case daily noise exposure is presented, rather than the noise exposure which would most typically be measured. The differences between worst case and typical noise exposure values is that the noise attenuation effects of topography, shielding from local man-made structures and from foliage are neglected. This is done because these features may be eliminated in a future development scenario. The effects of these noise attenuation features may reduce the noise levels by as much as ten dB at a particular location. This situation is evident for the measurement at Site E where the measurement-derived CNEL is 55 dB, whereas the predicted value is approximately 62 dB. This 7 dB of excess attenuation is provided by the terrain barrier between Site E and the U.S. Highway 101 noise source 1,500 feet to the east.

These noise contours were developed using established analytical techniques and traffic data from the Transportation Section of this Plan. The analytical procedures specifically account for the traffic volume, fraction of traffic comprised of heavy trucks and traffic speed. Truck volumes throughout this study were to be two percent and slightly higher on U.S. Highway 101.

Operation of the Richardson Bay Sea Plane Base and Heliport provided negligible impact in this area. While aircraft arrivals and departures are audible, the volume of traffic is too small to contribute to the nearly constant noise exposure from U.S. Highway 101 and the associated off-ramp in this area. Therefore, there is increase in noise impact from these aircraft operations in terms of the CNEL criteria.





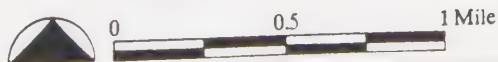
Figure 5.6

## Existing Noise Environment

### Mill Valley General Plan

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**A** Measurement Point





## Future Noise Conditions

**Table 5.2** predicts the noise levels resulting from the increases in average daily traffic associated with buildout for nine major thoroughfares throughout the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. These increases are describe to the nearest 0.5 dB to demonstrate the relative effects of the increased traffic volumes, although the absolute contour values are generally only accurate to + 2 dB. The noise level increases assume that the traffic speed and percentage of trucks remain constant between the existing condition and the buildout condition.

In all cases, the noise exposure increase from the buildout described in the Land Use Section is small or negligible. Therefore, no land use change is required as the result of future noise level increases anywhere in the study area.

**Table 5.2**  
**Future Noise Exposure Increase**

<u>Location and Direction</u>	<u>Existing ADT</u>	<u>ADT with Build-out Scenario</u>	<u>Noise Exposure Increase (dB)</u>
1. Camino Alto (between Vasco & Overhill)			
Northbound	2,320	2,700	0.5
Southbound	1,580	2,000	1
2. East Blithedale Avenue (between Sycamore & Carmelita)			
Eastbound	7,790	10,000	1
Westbound	7,220	9,500	1
3. Tiburon Boulevard (west of southbound on-ramp to U.S. 101 & east of Tower Drive)			
Eastbound	17,640	21,400	1
Westbound	20,280	24,800	1
6. Miller Avenue (between Camino Alto & Almonte)			
Eastbound	10,650	14,100	1
Westbound	10,410	13,200	1
8. Almonte Boulevard (north of Shoreline Highway)			
Northbound	10,210	12,900	1
Southbound	9,360	12,300	1
9. Shoreline Highway (east of Almonte Boulevard)			
Eastbound	15,450	21,400	1.5
Westbound	15,800	22,700	1.5



## **5.4.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

### **Intent**

It is the intent of these policies to prevent annoyance and health problems created by excessive noise levels and to maintain or reduce current noise levels in the community.

**Policy PH-3: The City shall appropriately regulate all new development, truck traffic and other noise sources to minimize noise levels in the community.**

**Program PH 3-1:** All construction, uses and activities shall comply with the following guidelines:

Guideline 1: GENERAL NOISE REGULATION - No person shall willfully make or continue or cause to be made or continued any loud, unnecessary, or unusual noise which disturbs the peace and quiet of any neighborhood or which causes discomfort or annoyance to any reasonable person of normal sensitiveness residing in the area. The following factors should be considered in determining whether a noise violation exists:

1. The sound level of the objectionable noise;
2. The sound level of the ambient noise;
3. The proximity of the noise to the residential sleeping facilities;
4. The nature and zoning of the area within which the noise emanates;
5. The density of the inhabitation of the area within which the noise emanates;
6. The time of day or night the noise occurs;
7. The duration of the noise and its tonal content;

8. Whether the noise is continuous, recurrent, or intermittent;
9. Whether the noise is produced by a commercial or noncommercial activity;
10. The intensity of the noise;
11. Whether the noise is natural or unnatural;
12. Whether the noise is usual or unusual.

Guideline 2: EXTERIOR NOISE LIMITS - No person shall create, maintain, or cause any noise which exceeds the noise limits indicated in Table A.

TABLE A

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Time</u>	Noise level <u>(dBA)</u>
All Single-Family Residential and Open Areas	9 pm--7 am	45
	7 am--9 pm	50
All Multi-Family Residential	9 pm--7 am	50
	7 am--9 pm	55
Professional Administrative	9 pm--7 am	55
	7 am--9 pm	65
All Commercial	9 pm--7 am	55
	7 am--9 pm	65

If the measurement location is on a boundary between two different zones, the noise level limit applicable to the lower noise zone shall apply.

The numerical limits given in Table A and Table B shall, however, be adjusted by the addition of the following adjustments where appropriate:

<u>Noise Condition</u>	<u>Adjustments to Limits (in Decibels)</u>
Noise contains a steady, audible tone, such as a whine, screech, or hum	-5
Noise is repetitive, impulsive noise, such as hammering, riveting, or barking*	-5
Noise occurs more than five but less than fifteen minutes per hour	+ 5
Noise occurs more than one but less than five minutes per hour	+ 10
Noise occurs less than one minute per hour	+ 20

Guideline 3: INTERIOR NOISE STANDARDS - No person shall create or maintain or cause to be created or maintained within the interior of a multi-family dwelling four feet from any wall, floor, or ceiling any noise which exceeds the limits of Table B below, and as adjusted by Table C, except within the apartment where the noise source or sources may be located. All new school, hospital, and residential uses and construction shall employ construction methods and materials necessary to ensure compliance with the limits specified in Table B.

TABLE B

<u>Type of Land Use</u>	<u>Time Interval</u>	<u>Allowable Interior Noise Level (dBA)</u>
Residential	9 pm--7 am	35
	7 am--9 pm	45
School	7 am--9 pm	45
Hospital	Any Time	35

The following activities shall be exempted from the provisions of this guideline:

- A. Occasional outdoor gatherings, public dances, shows, and sporting and entertainment events, provided said events are conducted pursuant to a permit or license issued by the City relative to the staging of said events;
- B. Any mechanical device, apparatus or equipment used, related to, or connected with, emergency machinery, vehicle, work or warning alarm or bell, provided the sounding of any bell or alarm on any building or motor vehicle shall terminate its operation within fifteen minutes of its being activated;
- C. Noise sources associated with or vibration created by construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property or during authorized seismic surveys, provided said activities do not take place between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. on weekdays, including Saturday, or at any time on Sunday or a legal holiday, and provided the noise level created by such activities does not exceed the noise standard of sixty dBA, plus the adjustments specified, as measured on residential property, and any vibration created does not endanger the public health, welfare and safety. Construction noise sources exceeding the above limits shall be allowed only upon issuance of a special permit by the City.

Guideline 4: SPECIAL NOISE LIMITS - Noise created within the City of Mill Valley shall comply with the following:

- A. Motor Vehicles. No person shall operate any motor vehicle which is not subject to registration under the Vehicle Code in such a manner that the noise limits described in the Vehicle code are exceeded.
- B. Hawkers and Peddlers. No person shall sell anything by outcry within any area of the City zoned for residential uses. However, this provision shall not prohibit the selling by outcry of merchandise, food, and beverages at licensed sporting events, parades, fairs, circuses, or other similar licensed public entertainment events.



- C. Attracting attention using noise. No person shall use any drum or other instrument or device of any kind for the purpose of attracting attention by the creation of noise. This provision shall not apply to any person who is a participant in a school band or duly licensed parade, or who has been otherwise duly licensed to engage in such conduct.
- D. Construction projects. The noise levels produced by construction projects shall not exceed sixty dBA plus the adjustments described above without issuance of a special permit. Said special permit shall not be issued by the authorized City department unless the applicant demonstrates that the equipment to be used produces noise levels that are the lowest of currently available equipment. However, no permit shall be required to perform emergency work approved by the City.
- E. Amplified sound out-of-doors. Persons intending to install, use or operate within the City a loudspeaker or sound amplifying equipment in a fixed or moveable position or mounted upon any sound truck for the purpose of giving instructions, directions, talks, addresses, lectures, or transmitting music to any persons or assemblages of persons in or upon any private property out-of-doors or upon any street, alley, sidewalk, park, or public property out-of-doors shall obtain a permit from the City. Such permit shall be issued for one day at a time and shall allow the operation of the amplifying equipment between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturday and between 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and legal holidays. The equipment shall be controlled by the permit holders so as not to disturb or be a nuisance to a person of normal sensitiveness. The only sound allowed shall be of music or of human speech.
- F. Amplified sound emanating from within a building. Amplified sound emanating from within a building shall not exceed limits in Table A at and beyond the property line.
- G. Noise arising from residential activities. Certain types of activities and noise sources associated with residential living, although not considered acceptable by most residential inhabitants, are, nevertheless, tolerated. It is the purpose of this section to

allow these noise sources to persist, however, at controlled noise levels and at specified times. The general noise limits of Table A apply to the noise sources listed in Table C below, except during the time periods specified. The higher noise limits listed in Table C are allowed only between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and on Sundays and legal holidays as designated in Table C.

<u>TABLE C</u>		
<u>Noise Source</u> <u>Type</u>	<u>Noise Levels</u> <u>(dBA)</u>	<u>Sundays and</u> <u>Legal Holidays</u>
Home workshop, power tools, and other power garden equipment	80	Limits set in Table A
People during outdoor activities	70	12:00 noon to 9:00 p.m.
Musical activity indoors	Adjustment to + 10 to limits in Table A	12:00 noon to 9:00 p.m.

- H. Noise arising from activities in recreation areas. Activity noise levels in any recreation area shall not exceed seventy dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on any day. The limits of Table A shall apply between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- I. Noise arising from activities at tennis courts. Activity noise levels at municipal tennis courts and at private tennis clubs shall not exceed seventy dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on any day. The limits of Table A shall apply between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH-3-2:** As specified in the Transportation System, through traffic should be discouraged from using predominantly residential streets areas and truck traffic should be required to continue to use Miller Avenue, Camino Alto, and East Blithedale Avenue east of Camino Alto. On other City streets, truck access should be limited solely to local delivery.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH-3-3:** The City shall encourage Golden Gate Transit to utilize quieter vehicles for transit service on local streets other than Miller Avenue, East Blithedale from Highway 101 to Camino Alto, and Camino Alto from East Blithedale to Miller Avenue.

**Time Frame:** As Golden Gate Transit considers the purchase of new equipment.

## **5.5 AIR QUALITY**

### **5.5.1 Existing Conditions and Projections**

The air quality of a region is determined by the quantities and kinds of pollutants emitted, and by the concentrations of these pollutants that accumulate under the influences of local meteorology and topography.

#### **Climate**

Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area are situated within the dry summer sub-tropical climatic zone. The area has an average annual temperature of 57 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) with mid-winter temperatures of approximately 50° F and mid-summer temperatures of approximately 65° F.

The San Francisco Bay area and the north coast area of California are affected by heavy summer fogs and an inversion layer which acts as a lid confining atmospheric pollutants and cold air near to the sea and ground surface while warmer air above is compressed towards the earth's surface by the east Pacific high pressure cell.

Light winds which reverse direction are inherent in the thermal topographic flow regime of the Marin County area. The winds travel southeast during the day and northwest at night allowing polluted air to cross back and forth. Sheltering high terrain northwest of Mill Valley restricts wind flow currents to the northwest and low wind velocity decreases the potential to dilute pollutants away from the source area.

## **Sensitive Receptors**

Land uses such as schools, hospitals, and convalescent homes are considered to be relatively sensitive to poor air quality because the young, the old, and the infirm are more susceptible to respiratory infections and other air-quality-related health problems than the general public. Agricultural crops, especially broad-leaved produce crops and cultivated flowers, are sensitive to air pollutants such as O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and SO<sub>2</sub>.

Residential areas are sensitive to air pollutants because people, including the young and old, are at home for extended periods so exposure periods are long. Industrial and commercial districts are less sensitive to poor air quality because exposure periods are shorter and workers in these districts are, in general, the healthiest segment of the public. Recreational land uses are moderately sensitive to air pollution because, although exposure periods are generally short, vigorous exercise associated with recreation places a high demand on the human respiratory functions, which air pollution can impair. Noticeable air pollution also detracts from the recreational experience.

## **Air Quality Regulations, Plans, and Policies**

Air quality is controlled through the attainment of ambient standards (maximum allowable pollutant concentrations) and enforcement of emission limits (maximum allowable rates in pounds/hour, pounds, day, tons/year, etc.) for individual sources. The federal Clean Air Act required the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which represent minimum air quality requirements that the states are to attain. NAAQS have been established for ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (TSP), and lead (Pb). California has adopted, for the most part, more stringent ambient standards than the NAAQs for these “criteria” pollutants (i.e. those for which NAAQS have been established) and, in addition, has set ambient standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride.

Other air pollutants have been found to be highly injurious, even in small quantities, but because they are relatively uncommon, most have gone through the lengthy and costly process needed to set ambient air quality standards. Instead, these pollutants are controlled through the National



Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPS), emissions limits that have been promulgated by EPA for certain industrial sources of asbestos, beryllium, mercury, vinyl chloride, and benzene. In addition to adopting NESHAPS regulations, California has established a comprehensive state program for the study, identification, and control of toxic (i.e., hazardous air pollutants). To date, four such pollutants have been designated toxic under this process: benzene, ethylene bromide, asbestos, and dioxin.

Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area are located within Marin County, one of nine counties that comprise the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin. Marin County has been designated an attainment area (i.e., an area where the average ambient concentrations have consistently been lower than the NAAQS in recent years) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and TSP, but is still a non-attainment area for O<sub>3</sub> and CO. An Air Quality Plan for the Basin has been adopted, as required by the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977. The Plan describes the air pollution control strategies necessary to attain all of the NAAQS by 1987.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is the local agency empowered to regulate air quality. New development must be consistent with the strategies of the BAAQMD for reducing levels of CO and O<sub>3</sub>, and for maintaining the levels of NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, TSP, and Pb. The BAAQMD regulates air quality both through its permitting and planning activities.

### Existing Air Quality

There are no major emitting facilities, and motor vehicles represent the principal source of air pollutant emissions in the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area. The BAAQMD operates a regional air quality monitoring network that provides information on average concentrations of pollutants for which state or federal agencies have established ambient air quality standards. **Table 5.3** is a five-year summary of monitoring data for most of these major pollutants, collected at the BAAQMD's San Rafael station, about five miles north of Mill Valley. Air pollutant concentrations measured at the monitoring station are compared in **Table 5.3** with the corresponding state ambient air quality standards, which are more stringent than the corresponding federal standards. Based on BAAQMD pollutant contour maps, ambient concentrations measured in San Rafael are expected to be fairly representative of ambient concentrations in this area. Specific information on each pollutant is provided in the Appendix.

Table 5.3

**Marin County Air Pollutant Summary, 1982-1986**  
**(534 Fourth St. Station, San Rafael)**

<u>POLLUTANT:</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>
<u>Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>: Oxidant)</u>						
Highest 1-hr average, ppm/a/ Number of standard excesses	0.10/b/	<u>0.10</u> 1	<u>0.11</u> 2	<u>0.11</u> 5	0.10 1	0.08 0
<u>Carbon Monoxide (CO)</u>						
Highest 1-hr average, ppm Number of standard excesses	20/b/	14 0	11 0	14 0	10 0	10 0
Highest 8-hr average, ppm Number of standard excesses	9.0/b/	5.6 0	5.5 0	5.8 0	4.6 0	5.9 0
<u>Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)</u>						
Highest 1-hr average, ppm Number of standard excesses	0.25/b/ 0	0.11 0	0.10 0	0.12 0	0.09 0	0.11 0
<u>Total Suspended Particulate (TSP)</u>						
Highest 24-hr average, ug/m <sup>3</sup> /a/ Number of standard excesses/d/	100/b,c/	<u>114</u> 3	93 0	<u>117</u> 2	102 1	<u>71</u> 4
Annual Geometric Mean, ug/m <sup>3</sup> Violation	60/b,c/	50 No	49 No	56 No	54 No	26 No
<u>Lead</u>						
Highest 30-day average, ug/m <sup>3</sup> Number of standard excesses/d/	1.50/b/	0.57 0	0.45 0	0.40 0	0.27 0	0.18 0

/a/ ppm:parts per million; ug/m<sup>3</sup>:micrograms per cubic meter.

/b/ State standard, not to be equaled or exceeded, for O<sub>3</sub>, TSP, and Pb. For the others, the standard is not to be exceeded.

/c/ The California Air Resources Board (ARB) has redefined this standard to apply to "inhalable" particles only (i.e., those less than 10 microns in diameter). The new 24-hr standard is 50 ug/m<sup>3</sup> and the new annual geometric mean is 30 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. Data on the particle size distribution of the TSP sampled at the San Rafael monitoring station was unavailable before 1986. According to the ARB, however, the new standards are "reasonably equivalent" to the old standards shown in the above table (see BAAQMD, Air Currents, March, 1983). Particulate data for 1986 reflect measurements that correspond to the revised standard.

/d/ Measured every six days.

Underlined values represent exceedances of the applicable standard.

SOURCES: California ARB, Air Quality Data Summaries, 1982-1986.

## **5.5.2 Intent, Policies and Implementation Programs**

### **Intent**

It is the intent of these policies to achieve State and Federal air quality standards and to facilitate the use of transit, walking and biking as alternative modes of travel, thus reducing auto-based air pollutants.

**Policy PH 4: The City shall implement programs aimed at reducing auto-related travel.**

**Program PH 4-1:** The City shall implement the programs identified in the Transportation Section for improving commuter parking facilities, transit, bicycle paths and urban trails.

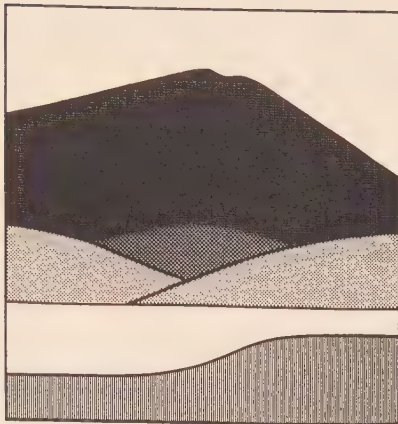
**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.

**Program PH 4-2:** Roadways should be improved only to a level necessary to eliminate traffic congestion and safety problems which could occur even with high use of local and inter-city transit.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing during the life of the Plan.







# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

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## **6. Environmental Impact Report**

### **6.1 PURPOSE**

The City of Mill Valley and Marin County have determined that adoption and implementation of the Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area Plans may have a significant effect on the environment and thus have commissioned the preparation of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The adoption of a local General Plan is defined as a "project" by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15378(a)(1). Furthermore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15166 states that the requirements for an EIR on a local General Plan can be satisfied by using the General Plan if it addresses all the points required to be in an EIR and contains a special section identifying where each of these points is located in the General Plan document. In revising the Mill Valley General Plan and the Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan, Mill Valley and Marin County have chosen to combine the EIR for the two Plans into one document. Since most, but not all, points required in the EIR are contained in the revised Plans, the EIR provides additional information as necessary.

This EIR describes the potential environmental impact, along with appropriate mitigation measures, of the 1989 Mill Valley/Tamalpais Planning Area Plan updates. It was prepared in accordance with Chapter 4 of the 1987 General Plan Guidelines and Article 9 of the 1986 CEQA Guidelines. The EIR, in conjunction with the Plans, is intended to fully disclose the probable environmental effects of the Plans and act as an aid to decision making for the citizens and policymakers of Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.

### **Scope**

Section 15146 of the CEQA Guidelines states that, as General Plans are by nature broad and comprehensive, so must impacts identified in a General Plan EIR be highly generalized and emphasize long-range secondary impacts rather than immediate short-range consequences. The topics addressed by this EIR are based upon an Initial Study and a Notice of Preparation. The Initial Study summarized the possible environmental impacts of Plan implementation. Agency comments in response to the Notice of Preparation (circulated for review on April 27, 1989) have been incorporated into the EIR. There are no inconsistencies between the proposed Plans and the Marin Countywide Plan or any other regional, state or federal statutes or regulations.

The evaluation of impacts assumes the amount of growth that would occur at complete buildout, as described in the Land Use section, of all vacant and underutilized parcels. This scenario is used for impact analysis because it is conservatively high, marking the upper limit of growth possible under the Plans. Growth under this scenario would add approximately 2,927 new residents, 1,374 new housing units, and 346 new jobs to the study area.

Actual growth may be less than depicted by the buildout scenario, given constraints to growth in the City and County. The factor that currently most limits new construction is a Marin Municipal Water District moratorium on water service connections, discussed under Land Use, Section 2.6.1 (Water Supply) of the Mill Valley General Plan.

### **Organization of the EIR**

The organization of this EIR generally follows CEQA Guidelines. A summary description of the "project" (i.e. the Plan updates) characteristics and the study area environmental setting is provided first, followed by an impact summary. The impact summary includes an analysis of the long-term benefits and short-term costs of the Plans and an analysis of alternatives to the Plans. Next is an inventory of impacts of Plan elements and mitigation measures. Whenever possible, relevant portions of the Plans are referenced in the EIR rather than repeated or summarized, as allowed under Article 11, Section 15166 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The Mill Valley General Plan and the Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan are both addressed in the EIR. In many cases, impacts of Plan implementation are similar for each community. When impacts and mitigations differ for each Plan, they are discussed separately.

## **6.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Location of Project**

The study area is located in the northern region of the San Francisco Bay Area, in southern Marin County. Mill Valley is located between the upper end of Richardson Bay, a shallow arm of San Francisco Bay, and the southeast face of Mt. Tamalpais. The study area includes both the incorporated boundaries of Mill Valley and unincorporated Marin County lands within the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence known as the Tamalpais Planning Area. The vast majority of the Tamalpais Planning Area lies immediately south of Mill Valley, and includes the neighborhoods of Almonte, Homestead Valley, Muir Woods Park, and Tamalpais Valley. West Alto, a small unincorporated area located between Mill Valley and Highway 101, is also included in the Tamalpais Planning Area (see Figure 1.1).

### **Definition of Project**

For purposes of this EIR, the project consists of the 1989 Mill Valley General Plan update and the Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan update, including all text, figures, maps and appendices.

As noted previously, impact evaluation assumes the maximum level of growth and development possible under these Plans, given their full implementation over a 15-20 year period. Due to the water connection moratorium, the impacts of the buildout scenario may not occur to the degree specified in the impact inventory. The Alternatives discussion (below, Section 6.6) illustrates the difference in impacts between the buildout scenario and slower rates of growth.

### **Objectives of Project**

The objectives of the Plans are stated in the objectives, policies and programs of each element. The 1989 Mill Valley General Plan is organized in four sections which comprise the seven mandatory elements. The complete text of objectives, policies and implementation programs can be found in the Plan document as shown in Table 6-1.

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**TABLE 6.1**  
**OBJECTIVES OF THE PLANS**

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<u>Plan Section</u>	<u>Pages in Plan Document</u>
<u>LAND USE</u>	
Residential Areas	
Tamalpais Area	2-14
Mill Valley	
Infill	2-20
Former RP	2-23
Commercial Areas	
Tamalpais Area	2-35
Mill Valley	2-60
Recreation and Cultural Facilities	
Mill Valley	2-87
Public Services	
Tamalpais Area	2-47
Mill Valley	2-101
Spheres of Influence and LAFCo Policies	
Mill Valley	2-106
Open Space	
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Mill Valley	2-117
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Mill Valley	4-37
<u>PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY</u>	
Geotechnical and Flood Hazards	
Mill Valley	5-9
Noise Conditions	
Mill Valley	5-25
Air Quality	
Mill Valley	5-35

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### 6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The environmental setting and existing conditions of the project area are described throughout the Plans. The table below lists each setting section by topic and references the location of the description within the Plans or EIR. Unless specifically noted, the setting describes both Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.

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**TABLE 6.2**  
**PROJECT AREA EXISTING CONDITIONS**

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<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
Regional Setting	2-1
Land Use	
Residential	
Tamalpais Area	2-4
Mill Valley	2-3, 2-21
Commercial	
Tamalpais Area	2-29
Mill Valley	2-52
Housing and Population (Also see "Residential" under Land Use, above)	3-2
Public Services and Utilities	
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Sewer	2-95
Police	2-98
Fire	2-97, 5-12
Schools	2-99
Recreation	2-86
Aesthetics	2-52
Earth and Water Resources	
Mill Valley	2-96, 5-1
Plant and Animal Life	
Tamalpais Area	2-58
Mill Valley	2-107
Transportation/Circulation	
Mill Valley	4-2
Noise	
Mill Valley	5-17
Air Quality	
Mill Valley	5-31
Cultural and Archeological Resources	6-26

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## 6.4 IMPACT SUMMARY

The impacts of implementing the updated Mill Valley General Plan and the Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan are summarized below in terms of the following CEQA-mandated topics: potentially significant impacts; unavoidable and irreversible impacts; impacts found to be insignificant; and the relationship between short-term uses and long-term productivity of the environment. The summary is followed by a complete inventory of Plan impacts.

### Potentially Significant Impacts

The following impacts- including direct impacts, cumulative impacts, and growth-inducing impacts- although potentially significant, can all be either completely eliminated or mitigated to acceptable levels.

- Complete buildout under the policies in the Plans would result in the construction of 1,374 new homes, allowing for 2,927 new residents. Complete commercial buildout under the Plans would create approximately 346 new jobs.
- Adoption of each Plan may alter the present land use of undeveloped areas.
- Development in areas of steep topography, high fuel loads, and narrow access roads would be particularly susceptible to wildfire.
- Residential development on ridgelines and grassy hillsides would be visible from Highway 101 and/or other major public vantage points in the Planning Area.
- Adoption of each Plan may generate "substantial" additional vehicular movement. A total of 2,593 new PM peak hour trips would be generated at buildout.
- The increase in traffic volume at buildout may increase safety problems for bicyclists and pedestrians in the Tam Junction area. Potential for motor vehicle accidents may increase at the Highway 1 interchange and along the Shoreline Highway.
- Grading and earth movement associated with any construction of residences or roads may contribute to slope failure, alter existing topography, induce local erosion, or expose people or property to landslides, mudslides and seismic hazards.
- Construction of residences on previously undeveloped upper hillside areas may alter patterns of intermittent drainages.
- Any construction of roads and residences on undeveloped lands may increase surface runoff by increasing the amount of impervious surface; any changes in the rate of runoff induced by development in upper watersheds could contribute to flood hazards in developed areas at lower elevations.

- Any construction of roads and residences on undeveloped lands may add new (exotic) landscaping plants or reduce the number of existing native and non-native plant species.
- Flooding and erosion of channel banks due to development could disrupt creekside vegetation.
- New residential development may contribute to the deterioration of existing wildlife habitat.

### **Significant Impacts Impossible to Avoid or Reverse**

Some impacts that may result directly from implementation of the Plans, and in conjunction with cumulative area-wide growth, can be neither avoided, reduced to insignificance, nor reversed, regardless of mitigation measures. Nevertheless, the Plan does contain policies and programs to minimize the effects of these impacts as much as practicable without sacrificing Plan objectives.

- Conversion of currently undeveloped land to residential uses is irreversible.
- The extension of public services, which may result from cumulative growth in the study area, is irreversible.
- Population growth is generally irreversible.
- In several cases, physical or environmental constraints limit the City of Mill Valley's ability to improve intersections which are projected to be congested.
- Although the land uses and densities proposed by the Plans would not place substantial demand on public water supplies, water supplies at this time are severely limited and may delay buildout of the Plans.

### **Impacts Found Not to Be Significant**

Some impacts of the Plans, because they are either insignificant or beneficial, would not require mitigation. In cases where the impact, while insignificant, is adverse, the Plan contains mitigation measures.

- As indicated in the Housing Element of the Mill Valley General Plan, even with the significant reduction in density recommended for the former RP parcels, the ABAG Housing Need Determination of 21 units between 1988 and 1990 and an additional 128 units between 1990 and 1995 for the entire Mill Valley Planning Area can not only be adequately met, but will likely be greatly exceeded.
- Implementation of the Plans would not place significant new demands on local fire, police, recreation, or sewage services. Any increase in local school enrollments from new development would be mitigated by school impact fees.



- No land uses are proposed that would substantially affect local air quality.
- The Plans would not allow new structures that would directly alter the course or flow of flood waters, nor would the direction, rate of flow or quantity of ground waters be affected by the Plans.
- No unique, rare, or endangered species of plants have been identified in areas where new construction is proposed.
- Although some wildlife would be lost and habitat destroyed, the overall diversity of species and numbers of any species would not be affected. No unique, rare or endangered animal species are known to inhabit any of the areas proposed for development.
- No land uses are proposed that would expose people to severe noise levels.
- Proposed land uses and new construction would use amounts of fuel and energy that are normal and consistent with small scale construction and occupancy. Demand upon existing sources of energy would not be substantially increased, nor would the development of new sources of energy be required.

### **Relationship Between Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity**

The Mill Valley General Plan and the Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan are designed to ensure that short-term decisions are made within a long-term perspective, by articulating goals for the area's future development. The benefits of the Plans, both short-term and long-term, are numerous and self-evident. They include provision for orderly future growth in a manner consistent with the wishes of the residents; preservation of environmentally sensitive lands; provision of housing and job opportunities for future residents; and the linkage of growth to availability of services.

The long-range cost of implementing the Plans is replacing open space, a valuable scenic resource and wildlife habitat, with residential uses. The Plans pose no long-term risks to public health or safety.

### **Growth-Inducing Impacts**

Communities can influence local rates and patterns of growth by developing infrastructure and utility services with capacity in excess of that required by the current population. Neither Mill Valley General Plan nor Tamalpais Planning Area Community Plan policies encourage installation of roads, pipelines, or other infrastructure that would encourage local growth.



## 6.5 INVENTORY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The following inventory summarizes the potentially significant effects of the Plans and relates them to appropriate mitigation measures. In general, the Plans anticipate environmental impacts and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures in the form of policies and implementation programs. Additional mitigation measures identified in the EIR are generally unsuited for placement in the Plans. When a mitigation measure mentioned in the inventory is derived from the Plans, its location in the Plans is noted.

Impacts and corresponding mitigation measures are grouped under broad categories generally corresponding to the topics listed in Table 6-2.

### 6.5.1 Land Use

#### **Residential**

#### **TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA**

##### Impact

- Complete buildout of the Plan would add 892 single-family residential units and 92 multi-family units to the Planning Area. However, the actual number of units built may be less after site specific environmental constraints, roadway conditions and sewer and water service capacity are assessed.
- The Plan designates 47 parcels with potential for subdivision. Each parcel's zoning designation often allows for more units on the property than are actually possible given application of the County Slope Ordinance.
- Buildout of the Plan would change the use of currently undeveloped open space.

##### Mitigation

- The County shall seek to limit negative public safety, drainage, flooding, circulation and visual effects of proposed development of the remaining undeveloped parcels or parcels with redevelopment potential in the Tamalpais Planning Area. (Policy LU-1)
- The County shall seek to make the maximum development potential of individual parcels more consistent with the development density allowed under current zoning and slope regulations. (Policy LU-1) The County shall rezone all currently vacant undeveloped parcels with subdivision potential of three or more parcels to a Residential Single-Family Planned District (RSP) and shall apply the County Slope Ordinance in order to determine the parcel's maximum development potential. (Program LU 1-1)

- The County shall limit new development to not exceed the existing pattern of densities in residential neighborhoods in order to maintain the existing pattern of density and character of the community and to limit negative environmental impacts. (Policy LU-2)
- Through a variety of mechanisms, acquisition, dedication or easements, the County should ensure the long-term protection of all or portions of remaining undeveloped lands within the Tamalpais Planning Area that have been identified as having significant open space values. Funding for acquisition of parcels should be pursued. (Policy OS-2)

## MILL VALLEY

### Impact

- Complete buildout under the Plan policies would add approximately 276 single-family residential units and 114 multi-family units to Mill Valley.
- Policies for the large, currently undeveloped properties (formerly zoned RP) propose relatively low density residential development, changing the use of current open space.
- Infill development allowed under the Plan would increase building intensity in already developed areas.
- Construction of large new homes and major additions to existing homes could threaten to reduce the existing supply of smaller housing units within the community, the existing character of residential neighborhoods, and the light and privacy of adjacent homes.

### Mitigation

- New residential development shall be compatible with the scale and appearance of the particular neighborhood and shall be integrated with and subordinate to its natural setting. (Policy R-1)
- The City will require Design Review approval for all new single and multi-family residential buildings, all additions or alterations to multi-family buildings and all major additions to and/or reconstructions of existing single-family homes (those involving 50% or more of the gross floor area of the existing residence). (Program R-1-1)
- Because large new homes and large additions to existing homes threaten to reduce the existing supply of smaller housing units within the community, significantly alter the existing character of residential neighborhoods, and reduce the light and privacy of adjacent homes, the City shall carefully regulate the size, height and setback of all new or expanded residential buildings. (Policy R-2).

- The City will amend the municipal code to specify that, unless variance findings can be made, the total maximum "Adjusted Floor Area" (gross enclosed floor area plus any garage space over 500 square feet in size and any potential living space with minimum dimensions of 7.5 feet head room and 8 feet by 10 feet in size) in all conventional single-family zoning districts shall not exceed 35% of the lot area for lots of 8,000 square feet or less. For lots larger than 8,000 square feet, the total "Adjusted Floor Area" shall not exceed 5% of lot area plus 2,500 square feet to a maximum of 7,000 square feet. (Program R-2-1)
- The City will determine the "Adjusted Floor Area" for structures in all planned residential zoning districts through the Master Plan or Design Review approval process with the size standards for the conventional zoning districts being used as a guide. (Program R-2-2)
- The City will utilize two multi-family residential zoning districts (a "Lower Density Multi-Family" and a "Higher Density Multi-Family") to replace the RM zoning districts. A maximum 35% "Adjusted Floor Area Ratio" will be used in the "Lower Density Multi-Family" areas and a maximum 40% "Adjusted Floor Area Ratio" will be utilized in the "Higher Density Multi-Family" areas. The total permitted area would then be allowed to be divided into various unit combinations as long as at least the minimum required on-site parking is provided. (Policy R-3)
- The City shall utilize a sliding scale minimum "Interior Yard" (side and rear yard) setback standard for all conventional single-family and multi-family zoning districts which requires a one-foot setback for each 1,000 square feet of lot area to a maximum of 15 feet in single-family districts and ten feet in multi-family districts. (Policy R-4)
- The City shall utilize a two-step "wedding cake" height limit in all conventional single-family and multi-family zoning districts which specifies that any residential building or portion of a residential building located between the required minimum setback lines and a distance which is twice all required setbacks may extend up to 25 feet above the natural grade. A residential building or portion of a residential building located more than twice all required setbacks may extend up to 35 feet above the natural grade. (Policy R-5)
- Through a variety of mechanisms (public acquisition , dedication or open space easements) the City should attempt to ensure the long term protection of all or portions of the remaining large undeveloped lands. (Policy OS-4)

## Commercial

### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

#### Impact

- The Plan focuses primary commercial development in the Tam Junction Area, allowing a total of 57,900 square feet of additional area.



- Although the first priority for Shoreline Area properties is public acquisition for open space, commercial development, including a Research Institute with offices and guest rooms (21,000 square feet), a 72-room hotel and restaurant, and 19,400 square feet of office space/health club, may be allowed under the Plan.
- Based on an estimate of 550 square feet per employee and full project occupancy, Plan implementation would add 264 jobs to the Tamalpais Planning Area.

### Mitigation

- If Shoreline Center is developed, strict design and environmental guidelines should be followed, and traffic impact costs should be mitigated by the developers. (Discussed further under Section 6.5.8, Transportation Mitigations.)
- Use County design guidelines for development of Tam Junction, including site planning and development guidelines, landscape and urban design guidelines, and signage and lighting guidelines. (Tamalpais Community Plan, p. 2-30)

## MILL VALLEY

### Impact

- The Plan encourages small-scale independent retail and service providers to provide a relatively low-intensity, primarily daytime, pedestrian oriented, multiple stop shopping mix of uses. The Plan focuses on the four commercial areas of the City (Town Center/Lytton Square, Miller Avenue, East Blithedale/Alto Center and Redwood Highway Frontage Road).
- Complete buildout under the Plan would add 4,000 square feet of additional commercial area to lower Miller Avenue, 30,000 square feet to the Redwood Highway Frontage Road, 5,000 square feet to East Blithedale/Alto Center, and 6,000 square feet to the Town Center/Lytton Square areas.
- Based on an estimate of 550 square feet per employee and full project occupancy, Plan implementation would add 82 jobs to Mill Valley.

### Mitigation

- The City shall preserve and enhance the community and neighborhood serving aspects of each of the four commercial areas of the City (Town Center/Lytton Square, lower Miller Avenue, East Blithedale/Alto Center and Redwood Highway Frontage Road) while maintaining and improving the diversity and mix of commercial opportunities in Mill Valley. (Policy C-1)
- Commercial development should follow specific site planning, building design and landscape guidelines in the General Plan. (Program C-2-3, Town Center/Lytton Square; Program C-5-4, Miller Avenue; Program C-7-3, East Blithedale/Alto Center; Program C-9-2, Redwood Highway Frontage Road.)



### **6.5.2 Housing and Population**

#### **TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY**

##### **Impact**

- Based on average household size of 2.13, complete buildout under the Plans could add 2,096 new residents to the Tamalpais Planning Area and up to 831 new residents to Mill Valley.
- Complete buildout under each Plan would provide for additional housing, with a total residential development potential of 984 units in the Tamalpais Area and 390 units in Mill Valley. This is considerably more housing than required to meet the ABAG Regional Housing Need Determinations.
- Since policies in the Land Use Element propose relatively low density residential development for the remaining large, undeveloped properties in Mill Valley, the homes could be more expensive than at higher densities. (Homes built under the existing Plan would still be relatively expensive, however.)

##### **Mitigation**

- In spite of the limited funding sources for low and moderate income housing, it appears that the housing need for low and moderate income households can be met. Plan policies seek to facilitate the development of affordable housing, with methods including in-lieu housing fees for housing elsewhere in community and inclusionary housing requirements. (Policies H-1, 2, 5-11, 14, 19)
- Plan policies provide for a diversity of housing types, including handicapped housing, manufactured housing, and second units. (Policies H-3, 4, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20) In addition, the Plan allows a greater number of smaller units or a lesser number of larger units by requiring an appropriate building size for the given lot and then allowing it to be divided into various unit configurations as long as the City's on-site parking requirements are met. The City would create two new multi-family residential zoning districts to replace the existing RM zoning district. (Policy R-3)

### **6.5.3 Public Services and Utilities**

#### **TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY**

##### **Sewer and Water**

##### **Impact**

- Total Planning Area buildout would generate approximately 309,150 gallons per day (gpd) of sewage. (Based on Sewage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM) estimates of 225 gpd/unit.) Each of the six SASM members has an allocated share in the capacity of the treatment plant. While total capacity is adequate, disparities in the remaining entitlements of the members is developing. Since the Tamalpais Community Services District allocation has been exceeded, additional sewage allocations would be necessary for further development in Tam Junction.

- Complete Planning Area buildout would require approximately 403,956 gpd of water supply. (Based on Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) estimates of 1/3 acre-feet/unit/year.) The current MMWD moratorium on water connections makes the availability of this water supply highly uncertain.
- Development of currently undeveloped parcels may require extension of sewer and water lines.

### Mitigation

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The County shall work with the Marin Municipal Water District and other communities within the District to allocate any remaining water supplies and to obtain an adequate long-term supply of water, with quality that is consistent with its current high quality, to Tamalpais Planning Area residents. (Policy PS-2)
- The County shall require all proposed development to demonstrate that public services are available and can and would be provided prior to approval of a development plan. (Policy PS-1)
- The County should encourage SASM to develop a plan to resolve further sewage treatment plant capacity allocation disputes.

#### MILL VALLEY

- The City shall coordinate with the Marin Municipal Water District and the other cities within the District to assure that an adequate supply of high quality of water is available for local residents. (Policy PS-2)

### **Police and Fire**

#### Impact

- Development in areas of steep topography, high fuel loads, and narrow access roads would be particularly susceptible to wildfire.
- One to two more firefighters would be required to provide service for the increase in population at buildout.
- Based on the City's goal of 1.6 police officers per 1,000 population, 1.3 more police officers would be required to serve City residents at buildout.
- Particularly since County sheriff service to the Tamalpais Planning Area is currently inadequate, buildout of the area may require an increase in staffing levels.
- Annexation of the Alto area (west of Highway 101), parcels along Miller Avenue and Edgewood Road, and parcels adjacent to Muir Woods Park from the County, as well as annexation of the public open space lands in the Blithedale Canyon watershed currently in the City of Larkspur, may shift responsibility for emergency services from those jurisdictions to the City of Mill Valley.

## Mitigation

### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The County shall maintain adequate water pressure for fire protection. (Policy PS-3)
- The County shall seek to improve sheriff service in the Tamalpais Planning Area. (Policy PS-6)

### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

- The Mill Valley Fire Department requires that all development must be within 350 feet of a fire hydrant and fire sprinklers must be installed in all buildings.
- Various activities should be implemented in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area to reduce fire hazards in developed areas, such as public education, fuel removal, fire-safe roofing requirements, and greenbelting programs.

## Schools

### Impact

- The increase in population from Plan buildout could impact the local schools that currently are at capacity.
- Adjustment of Mill Valley's Urban Service Area to include the Tennessee Valley Road area may cause children to attend school in Mill Valley instead of Sausalito.

### Mitigation

- Continue the school impact fees currently collected by the Mill Valley and Tamalpais High School Districts to provide additional facilities, when needed.
- The City recognizes the importance of a strong public school system to serve the community. To that end, the City will continue to work in close cooperation with the Mill Valley and Tamalpais High School Districts on issues of common concern. (Policy PS-3)
- The City will work with the School Districts to jointly address any changes in school sites or facilities that may result from changes in school age population or in school funding. (Program PS-3-1)

## Recreation

### Impact

- The increase in population (particularly in the Tamalpais Planning Area) from new residential development may result in a need for increased park and recreation facilities.
- Under buildout, residential development of undeveloped parcels may obstruct access to open space trails.



## Mitigation

### MILL VALLEY

- As funding is available, the City shall develop a new Community Center complex. (Policy RC-2)
- The Park and Recreation Department shall update the Master Plan for Bayfront Park. (Policy RC-1)
- To the extent allowed by law, developers of homes adjacent to open space areas should be required to provide continued access to existing trails.
- The City should continue to collect in-lieu park fees from new subdivisions (as allowed by the Quimby Act) to partially fund improvements in existing parks and the completion of Bayfront Park.

### LAFCo Issues

## Impact

- Jurisdictional and public service boundary conflicts are currently resulting in inefficient provision of urban services.

## Mitigation

### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The County shall work with the City of Mill Valley and LAFCo to resolve current inefficiencies in the boundary for the City of Mill Valley. (Policy SI-1)
- The County shall work with the City of Mill Valley and LAFCo to revise the boundary lines of the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence and Urban Service Area in order to reduce inefficiencies in the provision of public services. (Policy SI-2)

### MILL VALLEY

- The City shall not encourage the extension of City public services outside its boundaries. (Policy PS-1)
- The City shall work with Marin County, other affected agencies and LAFCo to resolve current inefficiencies in the boundary for the City of Mill Valley. (Policy SI-1)
- The City shall work with Marin County and LAFCo to revise the boundary lines of the Mill Valley Sphere of Influence and Urban Service Area in order to reduce inefficiencies in the provision of public services. (Policy SI-2)



#### 6.5.4 Aesthetics

##### Impact (Apply to both Mill Valley and Tamalpais Planning Area)

- Under Plan buildout, residential development on Kite Hill, Alto Hill, Shelter Ridge and other hillside and ridgeline areas, and commercial development in the Shoreline and Tam Junction areas, would be visible from Highway 101 and/or other vantage points in the Planning Area.

##### Mitigation

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The County shall make a comprehensive effort to maintain and enhance long-term visual and physical access to Bothin Marsh in order to protect the water-related habitat or area. (Policy OS-1)
- The County shall implement the Tam Junction Design Guidelines contained in the Plan.

#### MILL VALLEY

- New residential development shall be compatible with the scale and appearance of the particular neighborhood and shall be integrated with and subordinate to its natural setting. (Policy R-1)
- The City will require Design Review approval for all new single and multi-family residential buildings, all additions or alterations to multi-family buildings and all major additions to and/or reconstructions of existing single-family homes (those involving 50% or more of the gross floor area of the existing residence). During the Design Review process the site planning, building design and landscape guidelines contained in the Plan shall be utilized. (Program R-1-1)
- The City shall protect and, where appropriate, enhance the biological productivity and habitat of water-related vegetation and wildlife, endangered or otherwise distinctive or unique species, as well as the aesthetic amenities of the bayfront. (Policy OS-3)
- Through a variety of mechanisms described in the Open Space section, (public acquisition, dedication, or open space easements) the City will attempt to ensure the long term protection of all or portions of the remaining large undeveloped lands. (Policy OS-4)
- The City shall create and enhance opportunities for enjoyment of scenic views of natural areas such as the Bay, Mt. Tamalpais and riparian corridors. (Policy OS-5)
- As funding is available, the City will prepare a plan for protecting and enhancing important scenic vistas. This plan should identify the locations which have the highest priority for vista protection and enhancement and contain specific guidelines for appropriate new plant material and the trimming or removal of trees, overhead utility lines or other objects which obstruct or detract from views. (Program OS-5-1)

### 6.5.5 Earth Resources

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

##### Impact

- Grading and earth movement associated with buildout of the Plans may contribute to slope failure on steep hillsides with shallow soils, may alter local conditions on specific construction sites by disrupting, compacting or overcovering soils, and may alter existing topography.
- Removal of vegetation from construction sites may expose soils to wind and water erosion. Increased surface runoff from any construction of roads and residences may increase water erosion of soils and resulting siltation in downstream water courses and bay.
- Any development of residences on hillsides may expose people or property to landslides, mudslides and seismic hazards.

##### Mitigation

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The County shall regulate new or altered development and vegetation removal to ensure that site preparation and construction do not cause or contribute to erosion or slope failure, with resulting loss of life or property, loss of soils, sedimentation in streams, damage to downslope properties, downstream flooding, or siltation of wetlands. Development shall be located in the most accessible, least environmentally sensitive and most geologically stable area or areas of a development site. (Policy OS-3)

#### MILL VALLEY

- The City shall strive to ensure that grading, site improvements and structures minimize geotechnical and flood hazards to people and property. (Policy PH-1)
- The City shall utilize the geotechnical guidelines contained in the Plan in reviewing proposals for new development. (Program PH-1-1)

### 6.5.6 Water Resources

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

##### Impact

- Construction of residences on previously undeveloped upper hillside areas may alter patterns of intermittent drainages.
- Any construction of roads and residences on undeveloped lands may increase surface runoff by increasing the amount of impervious surface.
- Temporary surface water turbidity could result from storm runoff from construction sites.

- Any development on or near the shoreline of Richardson Bay or within the Coyote Creek flood zone could expose people or property to flooding. Additionally, any changes in the rate of runoff induced by development in upper watersheds could contribute to flood hazards in developed areas at lower elevations.

### Mitigation

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The County shall regulate new or altered development and vegetation removal to ensure that site preparation and construction do not cause or contribute to erosion or slope failure, with resulting loss of life or property, loss of soils, sedimentation in streams, damage to downslope properties, downstream flooding, or siltation of wetlands. (Policy OS-3)
- The County shall identify (and map) degraded or damaged reaches of streams and target them for restoration or stabilization, as possible in conjunction with permits for new construction or alterations. (Program OS-3-2)
- The County shall seek to limit the cumulative downstream erosion and flooding impacts of new development in the Tamalpais Planning Area. (Policy PS-5)

#### MILL VALLEY

- The City shall strive to ensure that grading, site improvements and structures minimize geotechnical and flood hazards to people and property. (Policy PH-1)
- Within the flood plain zone as identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Federal Flood Insurance Program, the elevation of the finished floor level of any new structure intended for human occupancy shall be designed to maintain an elevation of at least eight feet above mean sea level, taking into consideration subsidence. (Program PH 1-1, Guideline 11)
- New roads and structures constructed within the Flood Insurance Program flood plain should minimize any reduction in the surface area of the flood plain. This objective can be achieved by building structures on piles, or limiting landfill to only the area occupied by the structure and by allowing for the flow of flood water across roads which would otherwise serve as a dam isolating land now serving as a portion of the flood water overflow area. (Program PH-1-1, Guideline 12)
- The City shall require environmental review and a permit for all stream bed or stream bank modifications, and shall require revisions to the applications and mitigation measures, to comply with the Flood Plain Management Ordinance, the Riparian Zone Master Plan, and the environmental review completed on the project. (Program OS-2-1)
- As funding is available, the City shall identify and map degraded or damaged reaches of streams and target them for restoration or stabilization in conjunction with permits for new construction or alterations. (Program OS-2-2)
- As funding is available, the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works shall be responsible for preparing a Watershed Management Plan for the City. This Watershed Management Plan should include programs for erosion control. (Program OS-2-3)



### 6.5.7 Plant and Animal Life

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

##### Impact

- Any construction of roads and residences on undeveloped lands may add exotic landscaping plants or reduce the number of existing native and non-native plant species.
- Flooding and erosion of channel banks due to development could disrupt creekside vegetation.
- The proposed areas of new development support common and diverse animal species whose distributions extend beyond the local project area populations. Although some individuals would be lost and their habitats destroyed, the overall diversity of species and numbers of any species would not be affected.
- As new residential development is occupied, domestic animals may be introduced into the immediate area and cause native animal species to relocate.
- Development along the Bayfront could disturb valuable wetland habitat.

##### Mitigation

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA

- The Plan focuses on the long-term protection (acquisition, dedication or regulation) of remaining undeveloped lands that serve as a buffer between urban development and wetlands habitat. The County shall make a comprehensive effort to maintain and enhance long-term visual and physical access to Bothin Marsh in order to protect the water-related habitat or area. (Policy OS-1)
- The County shall establish a permanent public marshside park adjacent to Bothin Marsh. (Program OS 1-1) The County shall limit intrusive access along salt marsh edges ... and encourage public access to less sensitive marsh areas. (Program OS 1-2)
- The County shall implement existing Countywide Plan policies for establishing stream setbacks to protect stream corridors and banks from loss of riparian vegetation and erosion. (Program OS-3-1)
- On a project-by-project basis, individual parcels proposed for development should be surveyed to determine whether any endangered species of plants or animals inhabit the site.

#### MILL VALLEY

- The City shall encourage proper management for the long-term protection and diversity of native vegetation and habitats, throughout the developed portions of the community as well as the undeveloped open space lands. (Policy OS-1)
- As funding is available, the City shall identify and map native plant species, populations, stands or occurrences that are determined to be of heritage, landmark or wildlife special habitat value, or other amenity to the community. (Program OS-1-1)



- As funding is available, the City shall develop guidelines for long-term management of species, vegetation types, and habitats identified as having special value to the community. The City shall determine whether these guidelines should be advisory or mandatory to residents on private lands that contain valuable resources and on publicly owned or otherwise unencumbered open space lands. (Program OS-1-2)
- As funding is available, the City shall prepare a map of the riparian zones throughout the community. The extent of this zone shall be a minimum of 50 feet in each direction from the centerline of the creeks or streams in the developed areas (Catalpa, Sycamore and Cascade) and 100 feet in the undeveloped areas. (Program OS-1-3)
- As funding is available, the City shall prepare a Master Plan for the riparian areas of the City. This Master Plan should include a conveyance capacity analysis and management guidelines for maintaining and enhancing the riparian zone. Priority for riparian area restoration shall be given to the stream area between the upper ends of Old Mill Park, and Blithedale Park extending to the southern end of the area occupied by the existing lumber yard at the Millwood/Miller Avenue intersection. The conveyance capacity analysis will allow the City to determine the preferred stream bank protection techniques. The management guidelines should include provisions for litter removal in the riparian zone with yearly inspection schedules and fines imposed for the cost of removal by the City. The Riparian Zone Master Plan should also include public access and park development opportunities. (Program OS-1-4)
- The City shall protect and, where appropriate, enhance the biological productivity and habitat of water-related vegetation and wildlife, endangered or otherwise distinctive or unique species, as well as the aesthetic amenities of the bayfront. (Policy OS-3)
- As funding is available, the Parks and Recreation Department shall be responsible for preparing a marsh and wetland restoration plan for shoreline areas adjacent to Richardson Bay. (Program OS-3-1)
- On a project-by-project basis, individual parcels proposed for development should be surveyed to determine whether any endangered species of plants or animals inhabit the site.

#### **6.5.8 Transportation/Circulation**

#### **TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA**

##### **Impact**

- A total of 1,784 additional PM peak hour trips would be generated by buildout of the Plan.
- Daily traffic volumes at buildout would be generally 15 to 30 percent higher than existing average daily traffic (ADT) volumes. However, Shoreline Highway/SR 1 estimates of future weekday traffic are approximately 40 percent greater than existing traffic volumes.
- Development of Shoreline Center would generate 198 PM peak hour trips.
- Without mitigation, complete buildout under the Plan would degrade the following intersections from PM peak hour Level of Service (LOS) C-E to LOS F: Tam Junction (Almonte Blvd and Shoreline Highway/SR 1); US 101 (Southbound Ramps) and SR 1; and US 101 (Northbound ramps) and Pohono Street.

- Any increases in traffic volume may increase safety problems for bicyclists and pedestrians in the Tam Junction area. Potential for motor vehicle accidents may increase at the SR 1 interchange and along the Shoreline Highway.
- Commercial development proposed by the Plan in Tam Junction may necessitate restriping or other alterations to existing parking areas.
- The problem of on-street parking in residential areas may be worsened in the Planning Area, south of Shoreline Highway/SR 1.

### Mitigation

- The Plan (Table 11) recommends several mitigation measures to improve LOS degraded by buildout of the Plan at severely affected intersections:
  - Tam Junction: Add left turn lane to North and East Approach, channelize right turn lane on East Approach and provide acceleration lane/merge lane on Almonte Boulevard;
  - US 101 (Southbound Ramps): Signalize with 2-phase traffic control, widen SR 1 to 4 lanes, including left turn lane on East Approach from intersection to Coyote Creek Bridge. Add left turn lane to South Approach;
  - US 101 (Northbound Ramps): Signalize with 2-phase traffic control, widen SR 1 to 4 lanes from freeway to Manzanita intersection. Include left turn lane on North Approach toward Pohono Street, include right turn lane on South Approach, toward Pohono Street.
- The Plan states that the County shall be encouraged to make exceptions to their roadway acceptance standards in the interest of improving roadway conditions and allowing enforcement of on-street parking regulations. (Policy PS-4)
- Increase enforcement of existing parking regulations. New developments, including second units, should provide for adequate off-street parking, particularly in the hillside areas. (Policy T-7)
- The County should maintain and improve commuter parking facilities. (Policy T-8)
- The County should seek to improve auto and pedestrian safety in the Tamalpais Planning Area. (Policy T-10)
- The County should work with appropriate agencies to establish a "staging area" in Southern Marin to encourage visitors to use transit/high occupancy vehicles. (Policy T-11).

## MILL VALLEY

### Impact

- A total of 809 new PM peak hour trips would be generated by complete buildout under the Plan.
- Daily traffic volumes on the streets of Mill Valley at complete buildout of the Planning Area would be generally 15 to 30 percent higher than existing ADT volumes.

- New residential development may increase parking demand in neighborhoods which already have inadequate parking, and at the Miller Avenue and Manzanita commuter parking lots.
- New building developments or increases in the intensity of existing downtown land uses would require an addition to the downtown parking supply.

### Mitigation

- The City shall take an active role in working with adjacent jurisdictions and appropriate agencies to identify and implement improvements to congested roadways and intersections affecting travel into Mill Valley. In these discussions, the City shall seek a comprehensive discussion of quality of life, transportation, environment, and other buildout issues. (Policy T-1)
- The Department of Public Works shall work with the City of Tiburon, Marin County and Caltrans to study, plan and implement improvements to the Tiburon/East Blithedale Interchange, the Tower Drive/Kipling/East Blithedale intersection, and the Redwood Highway Frontage Road/Seminary Drive Interchange. (Program T-1-2)
- The Department of Public Works shall work with Marin County and Caltrans to study, plan and implement improvements to the Tam Junction, Manzanita and Pohono Street intersections along Shoreline Highway. These improvements should be consistent with the recommendations of the Tamalpais Area Community Plan. (Program T-1-3)
- In planning transportation improvements, pedestrian and bicycle safety shall be a high priority. (Policy T-3)
- In order to avoid adverse traffic, safety and environmental impacts on Bay Front Park, adjacent residential neighborhoods and the Mill Valley Middle School, the City shall maintain Hamilton Drive as a one-way westbound roadway from Seaver Drive to the Public Safety Building. Hamilton Drive shall to be extended across the upper end of Richardson Bay to connect with the end of Sycamore Avenue. (Policy T-4)
- The City shall continue to encourage the use of Miller Avenue as the primary access street between Camino Alto and downtown Mill Valley in order to protect residential neighborhoods of relatively affordable housing and minimize traffic and congestion on East Blithedale and Sycamore Avenues. (Policy T-5)
- The Department of Public Works will utilize various programs and techniques, such as improving paving, adjusting speed limits, improved lighting and land configuration to increase the convenience of using Miller Avenue for access to the downtown area. (Program T-5-1)
- The Department of Public Works shall identify and implement various programs and techniques to discourage through and commuter traffic from traveling on residential streets such as Sycamore and Nelson Avenues. (Program T-5-2)



- In order to avoid the requirement to acquire and demolish a significant supply of relatively affordable housing, the two-lane portion of East Blithedale Avenue from Camino Alto to the downtown area shall not be widened. (Policy T-6)
- The City shall implement the various policies of the Plan which are intended to minimize increases in traffic along this section of East Blithedale Avenue. (Program T-6-1)
- The City shall seek to maintain a Level of Service of C or better at all major signalized intersections in the City, with the exception of the intersection of East Blithedale and Camino Alto, consistent with the other policies in the Plan. (Policy T-7)
- The City shall seek to maintain a Level of Service of D or better at the intersection of East Blithedale and Camino Alto. (Policy T-8)
- Since roadway improvements at the intersection of Camino Alto and East Blithedale are not feasible, the City shall implement the recommendations for restricting development potential included in the Land Use section of the Plan. Any amendments to the policies of the Land Use section should consider the impacts at this intersection. (Program T-8-1)
- The Department of Public Works shall be responsible for monitoring the parking utilization rate for the existing parking facilities and on-street parking. When the utilization rate approaches 85% in the downtown area, the Public Works Department and the Planning Department shall coordinate recommendations for establishing additional parking facilities. (Program T-9-1)
- The City shall require all proposals for new development or redevelopment in the four commercial areas to include provisions for adequate parking. On-site parking facilities are preferable to payment of in-lieu fees. In-lieu parking fees should only be considered as a "last resort" option. (Program T-10-1)
- The City shall require that all new homes shall have a minimum of two on-site parking spaces and, unless adequate on-street guest parking is available, should have at least one additional uncovered, off-street guest parking space. (Program T-10-2)
- Unless variance findings can be made, when existing homes which do not have the required on-site parking are expanded, a minimum of two on-site parking spaces should be provided. (Program T-10-3)
- As part of the approval of all new second units, the City shall determine that adequate off-street parking is available for both the second unit and the primary residence. (Program T-10-4)
- The City shall work with other appropriate agencies to study options for increasing the number of commuter parking spaces or improving the utilization of existing facilities in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area. (Program T-11-1)
- Consistent with available resources, the City should identify and improve the elements remaining to complete the Citywide bikeway system and connect with bicycle trails and paths in the Tamalpais Planning Area. (Program T-12-1)
- The City shall continue to work with Golden Gate Transit to maintain and, where feasible, expand transit service in and to Mill Valley. (Program T-13-1)



### 6.5.9 Noise

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

##### Impact

- The anticipated increase in noise exposure from developed uses and associated traffic at buildout is small or negligible.

##### Mitigation

#### MILL VALLEY

- The City shall appropriately regulate all new development, truck traffic and other noise sources to minimize noise levels in the community. (Policy PH-3)
- All construction uses and activities shall comply with the noise guidelines contained in the Plan. (Program PH-3-1)
- As specified in the Transportation section, through traffic should be discouraged from using predominantly residential streets and truck traffic should be required to continue to use Miller Avenue, Camino Alto, and East Blithedale Avenues east of Camino Alto. On other City streets, truck access should be limited solely to local delivery. (Program PH-3-2)

### 6.5.10 Air Quality

#### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

##### Impact

- The increase in traffic generated by commercial and residential development in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area may contribute to a regional deterioration of ambient air quality.

##### Mitigation

- The City shall implement programs aimed at reducing auto-related travel. (Policy PH-4)
- The City shall implement the programs identified in the Transportation section for improving commuter parking facilities, transit, bicycle paths and urban trails. (Program PH-4-1)
- Roadways should be improved only to a level necessary to eliminate traffic congestion and safety problems which could occur even with high use of local and inter-city transit. (Program PH-4-2)

## 6.5.11 Cultural and Archaeological Resources

### TAMALPAIS PLANNING AREA AND MILL VALLEY

#### Setting

Historically, the entire Richardson Bay area was heavily occupied by the Indian peoples known as the Coast Miwok. The Richardson Bay environment provided an important resource for the Miwok people. Archaeologic evidence suggests that Miwok settlement in the area possibly started as early as 1100 A.D. and continued as recently as the mid-1800s.

In Mill Valley, numerous archaeological resources are recorded in the Alto Hill area, and at the base of Shelter Ridge adjacent to Goodman's Marsh. These resources are the remnants of cultural activities practiced by the Coast Miwoks. Some of the sites were major villages, while others were likely temporary and/or seasonal encampments. Based on the information available, it is possible to conclude that the base of the Shelter Ridge area was an important habitation locale to the Miwok Indians. While no visible surface indications of the presence of archaeological resources exist at the base of Shelter Ridge, this does not preclude the possibility that archaeological remains exist below the ground surface.

Records indicate the existence of numerous known archaeological resources to the east of Kite Hill, in the Scott Valley and Alto area. Two sites, which are located to the southeast of Kite Hill, have been the subject of intensive archaeological investigations. However, no visible surface evidenced of the presence of archaeological resources have been encountered on Kite Hill.

Two sites, located to the southeast of Alto Hill, have been extensively studied. These sites were temporary Miwok homes occupied seasonally when food was available in the area. Three archaeological resources exist on Alto Hill. All are shell mounds consisting of piles of material which served as disposal areas for the inhabitants.

#### Impact

- Certain development projects in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Area may uncover prehistoric resources. The potential for this to occur would be determined as development proposals are submitted.

#### Mitigation

- In the event that subsurface archeological remains are ever encountered, land alteration work in the general vicinity of the find should be halted and a qualified archaeologist should be consulted. Prompt evaluations could then be made of the finds, local Native American organizations consulted, and a course of action acceptable to all concerned parties could then be pursued.

## 6.6 ALTERNATIVES

The State General Plan Guidelines require a General Plan EIR to evaluate the No Project Alternative and an "environmentally superior" alternative capable of eliminating any significant environmental effects or reducing them to an insignificant level, even if that alternative impedes the attainment of the Plan's goals and objectives. This EIR also looks at a Property Owner's Alternative which represents the cumulative buildout of all of the former RP properties at the density which the owners indicated that they preferred (or would have been willing to accept).

### No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative compares growth potential and secondary impacts under the revised Plans with growth potential under the existing General Plan, written in 1975 and updated in 1977 and 1984.

As shown in Table 6.3, the existing Mill Valley General Plan allows considerably higher density residential development on the former RP parcels. Under the existing Plan, 293-1,044 units could be built on the 288 acres which comprise the former RP properties. The new Plan would allow a total of 84-87 homes on this same area. Consequently, complete buildout under the existing Plan would add a total of 596-1,350 housing units (both single-family and multi-family) to the Mill Valley housing stock, compared to the 390 allowed in the revised Plan. Based on an average household size of 2.13 persons, retention of the existing Plan would add between 445 and 2,038 more new residents to Mill Valley than the revised Plan would allow.

The impacts of the No Project Alternative would be largely negative, relative to those of the revised Plan. The increase in housing units and population would generate a significant increase in peak hour traffic trips and associated air quality impacts. Development of the former RP parcels at a higher density would intensify impacts (discussed earlier in this report) to earth, water, plant, and wildlife resources. In addition, more dense development on the former RP parcels, which are currently largely open space, would appear as a significant visual impact. Under the existing General Plan, only applications for four or more dwelling units (or for non-residential projects) are subject to Design Review. The revised General Plan requires that all new residences and additions which increase the floor area by 50% or more will be subject to Design Review.



In one area, impacts of the No Project Alternative could be positive: since the homes on the former RP properties would be developed at a higher density, individual home prices could be at least somewhat lower than for those built at lower densities under the revised Plan. However, these homes could still not be considered "affordable."

Projected residential growth (or number of developable lots) under the existing Plan for the Tamalpais Planning Area is the same as that under the updated Tamalpais Community Plan. When combined with existing Mill Valley General Plan buildout figures, the increase in residential units for the entire planning area would be 1,582-2,333 units (compared to 1,374 units under the revised Plans).

Under the existing Plans, the entire area would require 470,772-694,254 gallons per day (gpd) of water and generate 355,950-524,925 gpd of sewage at buildout. Impacts of this increase would be similar to those of implementing the updated Plans. Under either existing or revised Plans, the sewage treatment plant can accommodate projected wastewater flows, but additional water supply cannot be guaranteed. Approximately two to five additional police officers would be required to serve the Mill Valley population at buildout under the No Project Alternative.

The most significant differences in impacts of the updated Tamalpais Community Plan and the existing Plan concern proposals for commercial redevelopment in the Tam Junction and Shoreline areas. The existing Plan contains no policies to guide commercial development. The County Steering Committee examined a series of alternatives for each area, examining land use types, building setbacks, heights and massing, landscaping, and preservation of open space. (Final recommendations are in the Plan.) Under the No Project Alternative, commercial development throughout the Planning Area would continue in an ill-defined manner, without policy direction.



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**TABLE 6.3**

**COMPARISON OF REVISED PLAN AND NO PROJECT (EXISTING PLAN)  
ALTERNATIVE FOR FORMER RP ZONED PROPERTIES**

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<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Revised Plan</u>	<u>Existing Plan</u>
MISCELLANEOUS FORMER RP PARCELS (141.1 acres)	15-17 units	17 units
ALTO HILL AREA (60.7 acres)		
Project H	13 homes	34-204 units
Cal-Fong Property	13 homes	26-156 units
SHELTER RIDGE AREA (21.8 acres)	14 homes 6 condos	152-283 units
KITE HILL AREA (64.2 acres) [56.2 acres in Kite Hill Master Plan]	21 units [19 units]	64-384 homes [56-336 homes]
TOTAL (288 acres)	84-87 units	293-1,044 units
TOTAL REDUCTION REFLECTED IN REVISED PLAN: 209-957 units		

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SOURCE: City of Mill Valley

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**Property Owner's Alternative**

This alternative compares the development potential and secondary impacts under the revised Plan with those from the cumulative level of development which the individual property owners have previously indicated that they preferred and/or were willing to accept on their properties. As shown in Table 6.4, 263 units (158 single-family and 105 multi-family) could be built on the 288 acres which comprise the former RP properties under this alternative. The new Plan would allow a total of 84-87 units on this same area. Consequently, complete buildout under this alternative would add a total of 568 units to the Mill Valley housing stock; compared to the 390 units allowed in the revised Plan. Based upon an average household size of 2.13 persons, this alternative would add between 375 and 380 more new residents to Mill Valley than the revised Plan would allow.

TABLE 6.4

COMPARISON OF REVISED PLAN AND PROPERTY OWNER'S  
ALTERNATIVE FOR FORMER RP ZONED PROPERTIES

<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Revised Plan</u>	<u>Property Owner's Alternative</u>
MISCELLANEOUS FORMER RP PARCELS (141.1 acres)		
Gladish Property	1 home	1 home
Gordon	5-6 homes	6 homes
Rider	1-2 new homes	6 new homes
Warner Ridge	5 homes	15 homes
Werber	1 home	1 home
Harry Johnson, et. al.	2 homes	8 homes
ALTO HILL AREA (60.7 acres)		
Project H	13 homes	36 homes
Cal-Fong Property	13 homes	24 condos
		30 homes
SHELTER RIDGE AREA (21.8 acres)		
Seaver and Hamilton	6 condos	6 condos
Moraes Trust	3 homes	5 homes
Eucalyptus Terrace	11 homes	75 condos
KITE HILL AREA (64.2 acres) [56.2 acres in Kite Hill Master Plan]		
Silberberg	2 homes	4 homes
Khosropanah	3 homes	5 homes
Sievert (West)	1 new home	3 new homes
Gomez (West)	2 homes	4 homes
Sievert (East)	2 homes	17 homes
Gomez (East)	11 homes	17 homes
TOTAL (288 acres)		
	84-87 units	263 units
TOTAL REDUCTION REFLECTED IN REVISED PLAN: 176-179 units		

SOURCE: City of Mill Valley

Impacts of the Property Owner's Alternative would be similar to those of the No Project Alternative's lowest growth estimates. However, assuming that the revised Plan takes effect elsewhere in the Planning Area, site-specific environmental impacts of the Property Owner's Alternative (such as impacts to views, vegetation and wildlife, or hydrologic conditions) would occur only on the former RP properties. The increase in residential units for the entire planning area would be 1,552 units (compared to 1,582 units under the No Project Alternative's lowest estimates).

Under the Property Owner's Alternative, the entire area would require 461,844 gallons per day (gpd) of water and generate 349,200 gpd of sewage at buildout. Under both this alternative and the revised Plans, the sewage treatment plant can accommodate projected wastewater flows, but additional water supply cannot be guaranteed. Approximately two additional police officers would be required to serve the Mill Valley population at buildout under the Property Owner's Alternative.

### **Slow Growth Alternative**

This alternative suggests an alternative annual rate of growth, resulting in delayed maximum buildout. For purposes of comparison, this report suggests a reduction in Mill Valley growth from 30 to 15 units per year, and a reduction in Tamalpais Planning Area growth from 20 to 10 units per year. Buildout under this scenario would be reached in 26 years for Mill Valley and in 98 years for the Tamalpais Planning Area.

Implementation of this alternative would generally delay buildout impacts of the updated Plans, as discussed by this report. This alternative is unlikely to occur; the only way growth would be legally slowed to that rate would be if the current water moratorium continued for many years, or if the community enacted an extremely stringent growth management program including buildout of individual single-family lots. Most opportunities for discretionary growth limitations have already been utilized in Mill Valley and the Tamalpais Planning Area.



## 6.7 REFERENCES

- Don Dickenson, Director of Planning and Building,  
City of Mill Valley.
- Jim Irving, Paramedic Captain, Mill Valley Fire Department
- Kite Hill Master Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report. Prepared for  
the City of Mill Valley by John Roberto Associates, May 13, 1985.
- Eric McGuire, Environmental Services Coordinator,  
Marin Municipal Water District
- Lieutenant Ritter, Mill Valley Police Department



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